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THE
LIBRARY OF ANECDOTE
AND
TABLE-TALK.

' I love Anecdotes. I fancy mankind may come, in time, to write all aphoristically, except in narrative; grow weary of preparation, and connexion, and illustration, and all those arts by which a big book is made. If a man is to wait till he weaves anecdotes into a system, we may be long in getting them, and get but few, in comparison of what we might get.'

DR. JOHNSON. (*Boswell's Tour.*)

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS,
Stamford Street.

THE BOOK
OF
HUMAN CHARACTER.

BY
CHARLES BUCKE, Esq.

‘ It was a very remarkable circumstance about Johnson, whom shallow observers have supposed to have been ignorant of the world, that very few men had seen greater variety of characters; and none could observe them better, as was evident from the strong, yet nice portraits, which he often drew. I have frequently thought that if he had made out what the French call *une catalogue raisonnée* of all the people who had passed under his observation, it would have afforded a very rich fund of instruction and entertainment.’—*Boswell*.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
CHARLES KNIGHT & Co., LUDGATE STREET.

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THE BOOK
OF
HUMAN CHARACTER.

I.

WHO ACT UPON THE PRINCIPLE—DIVIDE ET IMPERA.

MONTESQUIEU, in his dissertation on the 'Grandeur and Fall of the Roman Empire,' ascribes its power chiefly to the habit of adopting the customs of the enemies, which they considered useful or preferable to their own; to their triumphs; to the interest which the consuls had in distinguishing their consulships; to the distribution of the spoils to the soldiers and the conquered lands to the citizens; and to the almost perpetual continuance of war. He does not lay, I think, sufficient strength on their constant attention to the maxim—'Divide et impera.'

When Sir Robert Walpole retired from the ministry, his friends, as well as himself, were agitated with the fear of the vengeance with which his enemies might attempt to load him. How did he ward off the danger? It is stated by his son*: by disuniting the parties coalesced against him; and rendering them not only odious to the public, but odious to each other.

* See Mem. Geo. ii. Pref. xvi.

Sir Robert has been accused of having been the grand corrupter of public principle. No! The grand corrupter of public principle is the education which inculcates, that money and station are the only legitimate objects of ambition. Walpole only succeeded with those, whom want or vanity induced to continue travelling in a road they had but too long been travelling. I respect Walpole for his intelligence, his prudence, his vigilance, and, above all, for his truly statesmanlike regard for peace.

Lord Shelburne was a slippery person; what he said, therefore, is not to be implicitly relied upon; but Nicholls tells us in his 'Recollections *,' that his lordship informed a friend of his, that no one ever possessed the art of dividing more than George the Third. 'By the familiarity of his intercourse,' said he, 'he obtained your confidence, procured from you your opinion of different public characters, and then availed himself of this knowledge to sow dissensions.'

It was the policy of the Medici family † to secure the independence of the Florentines by exciting jealousies, and equalizing the populace with the people. William the Norman had pursued an analogous system, when employed in consolidating his power. His chief reliance, however, was on the castles and other strong holds he erected on the domains he had reserved for himself.

'Divide,' it seems, has been a very successful policy

* Vol. i. p. 389.

† Galuzzi, *Storia de' Gran. Duchi*, tom. i. *Introd.* p. 46. Balzac has a chapter on Ministers who have refined too much in their policy.—*Discours Politique*, c. 3.

in Europe. The Austrians were indebted to it for the subjugation of Bohemia; our Henry V., in a great measure, gained France by it; and Queen Elizabeth acted a similar part in Scotland. By fomenting the rage of the two factions, which then divided that kingdom against each other, by giving aid to some and hopes to others, she balanced both so equally, that, while neither could conquer their opponents, both administered to her hopes, wishes, and interests.

When the Dutch first arrived in the ports of Ceylon, they found the Portuguese actively engaged in dividing the native princes from each other, and taking advantage of their feuds to raise themselves upon their ruin. A similar policy guided Cortez and Pizarro, in the western world; and that we are, in some degree, indebted to an imitation, in our acquirement of the Indian peninsula, is but too obvious to all who search the records of that hemisphere. Indeed, Lord Wellesley, when Earl of Mornington, expressly acknowledged, that the security for British interests in India depended on an establishment of a controlling power, or on the art of exciting quarrels and contentions among the native princes.

This was, also, Philip of Macedon's policy. His maxims were these:—caress those whom you hate; excite quarrels and jealousies among those by whom you are beloved; and flatter all you despise and detest.

Tyrants keep their subjects in divisions, that those subjects may fear to rebel; and when they war upon each other, they favour the weakest, that the strongest may afterwards, if necessary, the more easily be de-

stroyed. Thus one faction operates as an engine with which to annihilate another.

No prince ever knew better than Louis XI. how to discover the secrets of his enemies ; to divide those who were united ; and to overwhelm those with perplexities, who, but for his sowing the seeds of suspicion, would have lived in unity and peace. But what was the result of all this ? for we must always look at results :—a life of inconceivable trouble, an age of anguish, a death-bed of despair.

Louis IX. disdained a system of this kind. He employed, on the contrary, all his influence to heal the quarrels of his vassals, and even of his enemies ; and by this policy, assisted by his other virtues, extended the power of his crown far beyond the crafty Louis VIII., or his still more insidious and cruel predecessor, Augustus Philip.

But Charles V. ! ‘ Divide ’ was the practical motto he adopted in all his conduct during the religious divisions and civil and military negotiations in which he was engaged in Germany. He excited hopes in some to disconcert the projects of others ; he sowed the seeds of discord to reap the benefits of authority ; he strengthened this to weaken that ; and, by this means, enabled himself, for a time, to usurp rights and to encroach on privileges. By exciting divisions among his Spanish subjects, giving these places and those pensions, the Cortes yielded up their privileges ; and on those fragments he established a despotism, which, in subsequent times, has been the ruin and degradation of the country.

Happy will the time be when all governments shall reign for the good of the community at large! Those who reign otherwise are no sovereigns; but mere masters of willing or reluctant slaves. To be the chief magistrate of a *free* people is the finest station, the fortune of the earth presents.

Some sovereigns carry the maxim of 'divide' even into their cabinets. They believe it to be for their interest to set one minister against another, that they may watch over each other, and communicate results. There may be some policy in this during a usurpation; but it is a folly, even to extremity, in a regularly constituted monarchy.

Frederic the Great confesses, that hope and fear were the engines he invariably employed to regulate the conduct of all his servants. Cromwell listened to every thing; and Napoleon had no objection to witness jealousies among his officers. Their quarrels gave him intelligence he could in no other manner possess. Their war was his peace; their solicitude his safety.

He fettered, too, in another way. He compelled them to adopt a luxurious mode of living. Their rapacity could, therefore, insure no enrichment. They fought; they conquered; they plundered; they acquired large sums. They dissipated* those sums in luxury and voluptuous indulgences, and then felt compelled to turn their eyes to their master, to carve for them new conquests, that they might pursue the same jaded, worthless, and disgraceful course over again.

He excited the fear of his ministers and attendants

* Segur.

upon calculation. It was thus he arrived at some knowledge of their respective habits and characters. 'Besides,' said he to Las Cases, 'I was obliged to surround myself with a halo of fear; otherwise, having risen, as I did, from amidst the multitude, many would have made free to eat out of my hand, or to pat me on the shoulder. Man is naturally inclined to familiarity.' The imperial spoiler might have also added, to an utter detestation of tyranny.

II.

WHO NEVER ATTACK EQUAL ENEMIES.

THERE is no small disgrace in this; and yet the lion and the eagle act upon the principle. They never attack equal foes.

Some men resemble the black-capped titmouse, which attacks young and sickly birds, incapable of resistance; aiming its blows invariably against the skull. Others bear a similitude to the bustard; a bird which, though strong and active, is so destitute of courage, that even a sparrow-hawk can cast it to the ground. Some never fight, but in positions where no rampart can be erected against them. Others lie down, as it were, upon the sea-shore, and let the waves roll over them; as the white partridge of North America sits upon the snow, and suffers itself to be killed without attempting to move.

Plants, of course, can know no fear; but some exhibit curious instances of irritability. The yellow hoary mullein, for instance; a plant which, if two or three blows be given to the stem, loses its corollas; all separating from their bases, as if the calices round the

germens pushed them off. May we not here trace an analogy?

III.

WHO LOOK ON WHILE THEIR ENEMIES ARE DESTROYING
EACH OTHER.

MACHIAVEL, in his discourses upon Livy, has a chapter to prove, that to assail a city, torn by factions, is not the way to conquer it: and he instances many examples, particularly that of Philip Visconti, Duke of Milan, who spent two millions of gold, to no one practical purpose, in endeavouring to avail himself of the quarrels that so constantly divided and disgraced Florence. ‘When a city is thus situated,’ says he, ‘the wisest plan is to let them alone; they will destroy themselves: but if you see one party in danger of being totally destroyed by the other, assist the weak against the strong; become an umpire between them; for the probability is, they will cast themselves at your feet.’

This line of conduct would be indicative of strength at one time, but of weakness at another. There are no parallel cases.

To remain at peace, when enemies are tearing each other to pieces, would remind us of the advice given by some of the Spanish chiefs to the Emperor of the West*.

* ‘Tu cum omnibus pacem habe, omniumque obsideo accipe;— nos nobis configimus, nobis perimus, tibi vincimus; immortalis vero questus erat reipublicæ tuæ, si utrique pereamus.’—Orosius, *Histor. Augsbourgh.* 1471. Fol. ed.

IV.

WHOSE INTERESTS ARE PROTECTED BY THE PASSIONS OF
THEIR ADVERSARIES.

MEN frequently appear to touch the interests of others, when they do not touch ; as oil is supposed not to come in contact with water when poured upon it, but to be suspended over it by the influence of their mutual repulsion.

Men's interests, too, are often protected by the passions of their adversaries ; as snow, frigid in its own nature, protects vegetables from the intensity of cold ; and as restraints, in respect to property, increase, by preventing contests, the produce of the earth ; and securing rewards to inventors improve the conveniences of life, and give essential impulses to the exercise of human ingenuity.

V.

WHO NEVER LEAD ; BUT FOLLOW.

—‘ That odd impulse, which, in wars or creeds,
Makes men, like cattle, follow him who leads.’

MANY men succeed,—admirably ! by never attempting to lead. They follow. Burke alluded to a person of this sort, when he said :—‘ The gentleman in my eye is truly a child of this house. He never thought, said, or did, any thing, but with a view to it. He every day adjusted himself before it, as at a looking-glass.’

Some are content to follow all the days of their lives ; some follow to-day, that they may lead to-mor-

row ; others promise to stoop on the morrow, that they may lead to-day.

Alas ! how often shall the wheel turn round ?

Yet there is great truth in what Sir John Sinclair says :—‘ I always found,’ says he*, ‘ plans of association among those, who call themselves independent characters, of little real use. Each member of such an association is desirous not to *follow*, but to *guide*. All of them are attached to their own opinions respectively ; and, astonished that any one should presume to differ from them, they gradually drop off, either bought by the minister, or dissatisfied, that the measures they espouse should not be adopted. Persons of this description are capable of acting only in an *isolated* state ; and if the House of Commons consisted solely, or even principally, of such men, the business of the nation could not go on at all.’ This reconciles us, in some degree, to the disgrace of belonging to a party.

VI.

WHO NEVER WANT AN EXCUSE.

WHEN Sertorius desired to rid himself of the disgrace of paying toll to the Spaniards, and was yet unable to dispute the point with them, he affected to have no leisure for argument. ‘ Time,’ said he, ‘ is the thing I purchase ; than which nothing in the world is more precious to a man engaged in great attempts.’

* Corresp. i. 133.

When courtiers have excited great odium, they have always one apology;—the general scape-goat of political depravity:—

—‘ It is the fate of place; the rough brake,
That virtue must go through.’

Hen. VIII. act i. sc. 2.

The arguments of a bad man are, sometimes, even more insupportable than his actions. Political excuses, indeed, are often inexpressibly contemptible. When the Romans did an unworthy deed, their general plea was necessity*,—a word, however, meaning no more and no less than—policy! The excuses of usurpers, tyrants, oligarchs, and democrats, are much the same.

Philip, the husband of Mary, had his excuses too. At last he thought to gloss the atrocity of his executions, by desiring his chaplain to preach, and in his presence too, in favour of toleration!—Corruption will never want a pretence. The fair-faced affability and sophistry of a second-rate statesman, also, will always find supporters and admirers. Gold, gowns, aprons, ribands, stars, garters, and swords, being admirable reasoners.

When Suathes, the last king of Pannonia, accepted a present of a horse, a gold saddle, and a bridle, the Huns, who envied him the fertility of his country, pretended, that, by such an acceptance, he had sold his country to them and to their leader, Aradus (A.D. 744). Suathes denying the inference, they made war upon

* ‘ Bella aut pro sociis, aut de imperio gerebantur; exitus
‘ erant bellorum aut miles, aut necessarii.’—*De Off.* ii. c. 8.

him ; and he was drowned, after a defeat, in the Danube.

We all remember the fable of the wolf and the lamb. The moral may be applied every day : and a remarkable instance occurred in the reign of Peter the Great : for a party of Russians, being in search of one physician, having met another :—‘ You are a doctor,’ said they, ‘ and if you did not poison our master, you have, ‘ no doubt, poisoned others ; you are, therefore, worthy ‘ of death.’ Fortified by this argument, they dispatched him.

When Dumourier fled to the allies, he qualified his delinquency, by accusing the Marats, the Robespierres, and the rest of the Jacobins, of having been bribed by foreign gold to arrest almost the whole of the generals, and disorganize the armies. It is an old Greek proverb, that depravity only wants a pretence ; and excuses, while men are ingenious, can, as we have said before, never be wanting. If our West India colonies were to decline, the enemies of the slave-abolition would instantly fasten upon that abolition as the cause. And what if they should ? Highwaymen and house-breakers may, with as much propriety, complain, that the rope prevents house-breakers and highwaymen from becoming the richest of the community. The advocates of this iniquity insisted, with vehemence, that, in Africa, the slave-trade was a consequence of the wars ; whereas it was notorious that the trade was, in most instances, the cause of the wars. In fact, as it was truly observed in one of the debates on this question, there is hardly any thing, however unjust and cruel, that men, who are tho-

roughly selfish, will not bring themselves to believe right and defensible ; and will not, in consequence, adduce specious and sophistical arguments to support. What some men dare to do, they always dare to justify.

Excuses are sometimes convenient even to men of science. Thus, in the Royal Society of London, when errors were detected in calculation or observation, it was argued, if those errors were small, that they were of no consequence ; if large, that they could deceive no one on account of their magnitude*.

Poggio Bracciolini excuses † the licentiousness of his ‘ Liber Facetiarum,’ a book of tales, published in his seventieth year ‡, in which he has introduced anecdotes of several remarkable persons, by stating the general laxity, which, in his age, pervaded the whole mass of society. In the same manner the thief justifies theft, on the ground that there are a multitude of thieves living in the city.

It is an observation as old as Livy, that women excuse any fault which they think proceeds from love. Chardin says of the women of Mingrelia, that they are lively, polite, and obliging ; but so full of perfidy, in respect to lovers, that to obtain one, preserve one, or rid herself of one, they will be guilty of any perfidy. Men, who rely upon excuses, will act much the same in regard to rivals.

It is clear, that Edward had no real right in Scot-

* See ‘ Babbage on the Decline of Science,’ p. 144.

† De Varietate Fortunæ, p. 207.

‡ Sismondi, ii. 32.

land. His claim to the crown rested on the circumstance of William, king of that country, having been taken prisoner at Alnwick by Henry II., when, to obtain his liberty, the captive monarch not only agreed to pay a large ransom, and surrender the places of the greatest strength in his dominions, but even stooped to the abject condition of doing homage to Henry for the kingdom itself. From this last disgrace, however, he was, subsequently, relieved by Richard I.; and the Scottish king, in consequence, ceased to be a vassal. One hundred years elapsed, and Edward, having obtained great interest in the kingdom, disregarded the release of Richard, laid claim to the monarchy, and, after a long series of troubles, his successors established the usurpation; and when William Wallace was put upon his trial at Westminster, and pleaded that it was unjust, and even absurd, to charge him with treason, who was only amenable to the laws of another country, he was, nevertheless, condemned, and his quarters sent to the chief cities of England.

An excuse is sometimes worth a thousand pounds. The French attribute their defeats at Crecy, Poitiers, and Agincourt, to the too great ardour of their soldiers, and the false manœuvres of their generals. Courage or cowardice, according to their account, had little or nothing to do with the matter.

When men contemplate atrocities, any thing is sufficient for an excuse. The Spaniards made slaves of the natives of St. Martha *; and they grounded the justice

* Lopez de Gamar. Montesq. b. xv. c. 3.

of the injury on the *criminal* circumstance of their eating crabs, snails, locusts, and grasshoppers!

VII.

WHO ARE WEAKLY MODERATE.

WHEN men get into office, they retire from general society, and confine themselves to a limited circle. They no longer hear the free observations of acquaintances; they no longer look at objects at first hand, but as through a secondary telescope; they no longer come in personal collision with mankind, but trust implicitly to their secretaries and clerks. Hence arise a multitude of mistakes; and this is frequently the true cause why men, who have been very good politicians out of office, have made so sorry a figure in it. Lord Chatham was an exception to all this.

In respect to moderation, Mr. Martyn told Dr. Birch, that Pope told him, that he never knew but two *great* men in all his life who had been moderate in their politics; and those were the Duke of Shrewsbury and the Earl of Halifax. To this may be appended an observation: what are called moderate men, or rather what may be called 'imbecile' moderate men, can neither raise a storm in favour of liberty, nor quell one in favour of despotism. They must be acted for. They produce no result for themselves. A wise moderation is, assuredly, a virtue of the first quality; but who ought to be lukewarm when the liberties of his country are in danger? To be moderate in such an emergency is to be no other than a slave or a coward.

VIII.

WHO CAN DO LITTLE THINGS GREATLY.

GRAY was an instance ; and he gave as a reason why he did not complete his poem on ' Education,' that *he could not*. ' I have been used,' said he, ' to write chiefly lyric poetry, in which, the poems being *short*, I have accustomed myself to polish every part of them with care ; and as this has become a habit, I can scarcely write in any other manner : the labour of this in a *long* poem would be hardly tolerable ; and if accomplished, it might possibly be deficient in effect, by wanting the *chiaro-oscuro* *.'

Some men, however, unite a comprehensive capacity with a minute precision of inquiry, very remarkable. They take for granted, that you know nothing of the subject ; they begin, therefore, at the beginning ; are consecutive in all their relations ; and finish with leaving nothing for you to say, and scarcely any thing to inquire. The late Dr. Wollaston is said to have been of this order.

Johnson was accustomed to assert, that a truly strong mind is that which can embrace equally great things and small. ' I would have a man great in great things, and elegant in little things.' At another time, when Mr. Boswell said, that he feared he had put in his Journal too many little incidents :—' There is nothing,' answered Johnson, ' too little for so little a creature as man. It is by studying little things that we attain the great art of having as little misery and as much happiness as possible.'

* Mathias, vol. ii. p. 598.

Thomson was not only great in little things, but great in the great; and for this he was justly valued by the first critic of his age. ‘Thomson thinks,’ said he, ‘in a peculiar train, and he thinks always as a man of genius; he looks round on nature and on life with the eye which Nature bestows only on a poet; the eye that distinguishes, in every thing presented to his view, whatever there is, in which imagination can be delighted to be detained, and with a mind that at once comprehends the vast, and attends to the minute. The reader of the Seasons wonders that he never saw before what Thomson shows him; and that he never yet felt what Thomson impresses.’

Of some men, we may say,—little passions are the governors of their thoughts by day; little interests the toil of all their thoughts by night.

Can little minds estimate great ones?

Is any thing too small for the contemplation of a lofty intellect?

Can those, who spend their lives in contemplating parts, ever hope to comprehend a whole? ‘Great weights,’ nevertheless, ‘often hang on little wires*.’

Who, that lives in his own esteem, would form the wish to be a Horace Walpole? Certainly not, if the following criticism be true:—‘Whatever was little seemed to him great; and whatever was great seemed to him little. Serious business was to him a trifle; and trifles were his serious business†.’

Turn we now to another part of the horizon:—there are men, who, great in themselves, if any thing little belong to them, that little is imposed by circum-

* Bacon, vol. i. p. 89. 4to.

† Edinburgh Review.

stances; and lamentable is it to know how awfully pressed down by circumstances some great minds have been, and still are, without receiving the smallest portion of help. The greater the desert, the greater the neglect.

IX.

THE COUNT DE SOISSONS.

THIS nobleman lived in the time of Henry IV. of France; and he is described by the Duke de Sully as substituting gravity for grandeur; and as uniting a dry seriousness to all that is mean and detestable in dissimulation.

Characters of this kind are not unfrequent either in Germany or in Spain; and sometimes they are to be met with even in England; and of this kind was Lord ———, whom Dr. Laurence accused, in a letter to Mr. Burke, of having been desirous not to be limited in debate; that by appearing in his place on the side of the people of Ireland, he might save his estate in the event of a revolution.

X.

WHO DO THE REVERSE TO WHAT THEY INTEND.

MANY men of genius have laboured to effect one thing; and, in attempting to do it, have done exactly the reverse. Of this Berkeley may be cited as an instance. His design was to settle sceptics, and to confound atheists. The result of his argument, however, is to make thousands doubt where only one doubted before.

XI.

WHO SPEAK TRUTH FOR IGNOBLE ENDS.

AUGEREAU is described as having been 'one of the greatest of ruffians, in a period fertile in villains.' He professed himself a republican, and yet accepted the dukedom of Castiglione. On the reverse of Napoleon he was, though it might have been amply predicted, so hostile, that he even insulted his master. 'You have conducted yourself,' said Napoleon, when he saw him in the south, on his way to Elba, 'very badly towards me.' 'Of what have you to complain?' answered Augereau, without even deigning to take off his hat. 'Has not your insatiable ambition brought us to the condition in which we are? Have you not sacrificed every thing to it—even the welfare of France? I care no more for the Bourbons than for you. I regard my country alone.' On this Napoleon suddenly turned away, took off his hat to the Marshal, and returned to his carriage.

The conduct of Augereau is an example to prove, that noble truths may be spoken to unworthy ends. At the Tuileries 'none more obsequious*.'

XII.

WHO PRESERVE FRIENDSHIP WITH BOTH PARTIES.

THE Marquis de Dangeau was the confidant both of Louis XIV. and his sister-in-law, the Princess Hen-

* Bourrienne.

rietta; between whom he was employed in carrying messages and answers, which he frequently wrote himself, particularly for the princess. By this double confidence he made his fortune; for he managed his diplomacy with such discretion, that neither suspected he was the confidant of the other.

Pope managed to keep friends with Bolingbroke, Oxford, and Harcourt, the heads of the Tories; as well as with Craigs and Halifax, the heads of the Whigs. 'I can pray,' said he, in a letter to a friend, 'not only for men of opposite parties, but of opposite opinions.' In this he resembled Atticus, who preserved friendship with Pompey and with Cæsar, with Brutus and with Anthony, with Hortensius, Clodius, and Cicero. Sir William Temple, giving full credit to Cornelius Nepos, therefore, calls Atticus the wisest and best of the Romans*. But a knowledge of man, in the abstract, will, I rather suspect, teach us to fear, that he, who could live familiarly with all the heads of the various factions, from Sylla to Augustus, must have been a man of more policy than probity †.

His fortune, at the death of his uncle, was immense. He would never accept a post, though he might, no

* Judge Hale translated Nepos' Life of Atticus; but I cannot accord with many of his political and moral observations.

† The Abbé de St. Real criticises Atticus with no small degree of justice.—*Cesarion, ou Entretiens Divers*. Bolingbroke is, also, particularly severe on this person. 'His talents were usury and trimming,' says he; 'and had he lived at Athens, he would have been branded with infamy for keeping well with all sides, and venturing upon none.'

doubt, have been consul. He was artful enough to see that his fortune and his peace were best secured by living privately. Yet he had sufficient ambition to marry his daughter to Agrippa, and thence became (accidentally) grandfather to the emperor Tiberius.

The great objects in life of Atticus were tranquillity and security. Hence, when he might have been an actor on a great scene, he preferred safety in the humility of a spectator; thinking, and perhaps not without some negative justice, that

‘The post of honour is a private station.’

This maxim, however, is a dangerous one, if generally applied, since it would give to tyranny a permanency of power. Were all good men to act thus, when would the wicked cease their sway? A person of large fortune has this to be expected from him;—that he shall largely partake in the public danger.

Neutrality is better than complying with bad men’s passions; but as it ‘conciliates no friendship and prevents no enmity*,’ it must be well managed, or it will end in danger, if not punishment, from a victorious party. Neutrality, however, in the cause of our country, can only be agreeable to the taste of that unreflecting, unfeeling, unforeseeing race,—to adopt the language of the Marchmont Papers †,—none of whom have any true sentiments concerning duty, interest, or honour.

* De la Houssaie. *Hist. Govern. of Venice*, p. 56.

† Vol. ii. p. 255.

XIII.

LOVERS OF POWER.

To a love of power have been ascribed not only avarice, the love of liberty, the pleasure of virtue, and every exertion of the mind ; but even * the love of tranquillity and solitude. It would require some trouble to establish this : but three things are certain ; viz. that to possess power is to abuse it ; that to increase power is to purchase malevolence ; and that the persons most to be feared in times of tumult, are the ambitious, the indigent, the daring, and the desperate. To this may be added, that as power must rest somewhere, it is as injurious to restrain it injudiciously, as it is to let it descend into capability of licence.

Plato, even the 'divine' Plato, sometimes writes strange inconsistencies. For instance, he represents Socrates, in his Republic, asserting, that those souls, which descend from heaven, as choosing 'a commanding and magnificent life,' esteem power and authority as the only desirable ends of existence. He is much more correct in the greater Hippias. 'Having ability in public affairs, and power in the state, of which we are members, are, of all things, the most beautiful ; and want of such power, with a total defect of such ability, has, of all things, the meanest aspect.' 'In the name of the gods, then,' answers Socrates, 'does it not follow from this, that skill and knowledge are, of all things, the most beautiful, and want of them

* Cic. de Off. i. c. 20, 21.

‘the contrary? But softly, my dear friend, for I am under fears about the rectitude of our present conclusions. These appear beautiful only to the—multitude.’

Xenophon speaks of a law, which forbade any one who had a horse, to travel on foot. Conquerors, and even mere warriors, seem to act in the same spirit of legislation.

————— ‘As fall the dews on quenchless sands,
Blood only serves to wash Ambition’s hands.’

And yet ambition is only vicious in a vicious mind. Is it not shameful, then, for enlightened societies to flatter men with a glory which belongs equally to Greek, Roman, and Barbarian?

Tacitus calls the love of power the most flagrant of all the mental affections. Power is no evidence of merit at any time; not even when it has been acquired; hence arbitrary power is as intolerable to a prince as it is to a people. It makes that, too, transitory, which we would fain wish to be permanent.

Power changes the purposes of men, and turns even their virtues into crimes:—

————— ‘Having plots on all,
No tree, that shades the prospect, but must fall.’

For power not only elicits cruelty and tyranny; it engenders and produces them. There seems no fire in flint. Strike it, and apply it,—a city blazes and crumbles into ashes.

Men of princely stations too often regard the sword more than the balance. Their deeds are, therefore,

like spiral movements round a corrupt and ever-decaying centre. The consequence ?

————— ‘Imperial spoiler!

Give me back my father; give me back my kindred;
Give me the fathers of ten thousand orphans;
Give me the sons, in whom thy ruthless sword
Has left our widows childless.’—*Brooke*.

Some men have argued, and in fact do, by their practice, argue every day, as if, having the power to wrong others, the very possession of that power gives them a right. Sir Ralph Sadler was of this order. At least, he appears to have been so in one instance, and that not an unimportant one. ‘As for ‘the Queen of Scots,’ said he to Queen Elizabeth, in privy council, on the subject of the restoration of Queen Mary to the throne of Scotland,—‘as to the Queen ‘of Scots, she is in your owne hands. Your Majesty ‘may, therefore, use her, as she shall not be able to ‘hurte you: and to that end surely God hathe delivered her into your handes; trusting, that your ‘Majestie will not neglect the benefite by God afforded ‘unto you in this delyverce of such an enemie into your ‘handes.’

How often,—but—

‘I will not bolt this matter to the bran,
As Bradwardine and holy Austin can.’—*Dryden*.

Horace Walpole draws a curious distinction in respect to the love of power, which actuated his father, Sir Robert Walpole, and Mr. Pelham. ‘The former loved ‘it so much,’ says he, ‘that he would not endure a rival; ‘the latter so vehemently, that he would endure any

‘ thing.’ As to Bolingbroke, Onslow, the Speaker, insisted, that his object was power, without any other gratification than what the present enjoyment gave him ; that is, he had no prospective views.

I doubt this : but it is certain, that multitudes of men are merely actuated by the present feeling ; and it is equally certain, that Sir William Temple spoke like a prophet, when he asserted, that a man in public affairs is like one at sea, never in his own disposal, but in that of the winds and tides.

Lord Chesterfield once tried to persuade Lord Scarborough to accept office ; but his lordship replied, that the natural warmth and melancholy of his temper made him unfit for it. ‘ Besides,’ said he, ‘ I know very well, that in these ministerial employments, the course of business makes it necessary to do many hard and some unjust things, which can only be authorized by the Jesuitical casuistry of the direction of the intention ; a doctrine I cannot adopt.’

Had Lord Chesterfield stopped here in giving an account of this conversation, it would have passed off lightly ; but he adds, no doubt, from the experience he had himself acquired,—‘ Whether Lord Scarborough was the *first* that ever made that objection, I cannot affirm, but I suspect that he will be the *last*.’

XIV.

CONFORMERS TO THE TASTE OF OTHERS.

SOME have an extraordinary power of conforming to the tastes of others, and even acting with them in concert, so that every thing executed appears the offspring of one mind.

Michael Colonna, the painter, had this faculty to a very extraordinary degree; insomuch, that Lanzi assures us*, that though he painted with Dentone, Mittelli, Alboresi, and Pizzioli, no one, who gazed upon the pictures, would have any conception that each picture was the production of two masters. Instances of this are rare.

XV.

WHO NEVER INTERFERE WITH OTHER MEN'S CONCERNS.

THESE are very agreeable persons to live near; but I do not confound them with those sketched in Thomson's 'Castle of Indolence.' They may be very active in their own concerns, and yet very reluctant to engage in those of other persons. There are some, however, of whom the following passage is exceedingly characteristic:—

'There nought but candour reigns, indulgent ease,
Good-natured lounging, sauntering up and down;
They, who are pleased themselves, must always please;
On others' ways they never squint or frown,
Nor heed what haps in hamlet or in town.'

* Istor. Pitt. Ital.

We could very much envy some of the higher classes in Florence, and some of the lower in Naples. ‘The river Arno,’ says Gray, in a letter to his father, ‘runs under our windows, which we can fish out of. The sky is so serene, and the air so temperate, that one can sit in the open air all night long, in a slight gown, without any danger; and the marble bridge is the resort of every body, where they hear music, eat iced creams, and sup by moonlight.’ ‘The common sort at Naples,’ says he, in a letter to his mother, ‘are a jolly, lively kind of animals, more industrious than Italians usually are; they work till evening, then take their lute or guitar (for they all play), and walk about the city or upon the sea-shore with it, to enjoy the fresco.’

If life could be passed thus by all orders of persons, who would care to interfere in any thing belonging to his neighbour?

XVI.

WHERE POLITENESS IS ALTERED BY THE MENTION OF MONEY.

MANNERS and conversation are not all commanding. We often admire those qualities in persons we are fated to condemn, and of this Charles II. was a conspicuous example. Courtesy and good humour are, in fact, but too often the companions of loose principles, loose thoughts, loose conduct. I hope no *wise* person, now, will insist that I say it is *always* the case.

When men meet in public, or when they mix together in private, how graciously they look! how cour-

teously they smile! how agreeably they converse! Mention the subject of money; attempt to bargain for an estate, a horse, or even a cane, how frigid does the atmosphere immediately become! All seem transported, as if by magic, from the Tuileries at Paris to the Royal Exchange in London, or the Jews' Walk at Amsterdam. Politeness, then, no longer resembles the bark of the birch tree, in being more durable than the wood which it envelops.

XVII.

WHO ASK ADVICE, WITHOUT TELLING ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

'Nulla meis sine te quæretur gloria rebus.'

Æn., ix., v. 278.

MR. BURKE observed, though upon an unfortunate occasion*, that 'he, who calls in the aid of an equal judgment, doubles his own.' This argument reminds one of Correggio's picture of 'Christ praying in the Garden †.' The Messiah receives his light from Heaven; the angel, who administers, receives the light from Him.

Some,—'to compare small things with great,'—resemble, in conversation, Ariosto in narration. They commence, as it were, in the middle of the combat, and never afterwards stop to inform us any thing of the previous history. They rush into the midst, and finish as they began, with neither preparation nor explanation.

Of this order was the Duke of Newcastle. He would

* His difference with Mr. Fox, Feb. 9, 1790.

† In the Angerstein Gallery.

talk of affairs belonging to himself, as if his hearers knew them as well as he did; and then express surprise, that advice was given inconsonant with his own.

XVIII.

RIENZI.

IN one respect Rienzi stands single from the rest of mankind. Boispareux assures us, that he was abject in adversity, and astonished at the smallest calamity. In this he was far from being singular; but,—and here arises the wonder,—he was, at the same time, capable of employing the boldest measures for re-establishing his fortune. In this I am not aware of a parallel*.

XIX.

WHO WASTE BY LITTLES.

JOHNSON must consent to fill this measure up. ‘Our friend,’ said he, ‘is wasting his fortune. Wasting a fortune is evaporation by a thousand imperceptible means. If it were a stream, he’d stop it. Were he a gamester, it could be said, he had hopes of winning. Were he a bankrupt in trade, he might grow rich; but he has neither spirit to spend, nor resolution to spare. He does not spend fast enough to have pleasure from it. He has the crime of prodigality, and the wretchedness of parsimony. If a man is killed in a duel, he is killed as many a one has been killed; but it is a sad thing to lie down and die; to bleed to

* The character of Rienzi will be the subject of a future page.

‘ death, because he has not fortitude enough to bear the wound, or even to stitch it up.’

Those who waste by little are ever sliding on inclined planes. Their minds, too, assume the hue of their fortunes, as moths assume the colour of the clothes they eat.

To die by little and little,—every day lengthening the shadow of existence,—is indeed miserable; more especially to those who have rapid and restless imaginations, ever longing

—————‘ For beds of pleasant green,
Where never yet was creeping creature seen *.’

XX.

SEALS.

THE difficulty is to get fairly into society; no great power being required, provided we have the will, to get out of it. And this reminds me of seals: for seals are able to penetrate the ice from below, be it ever so thick; yet are utterly unable to make their way into it from above †.

XXI.

WHO PREFER ONE BIRD IN THE HAND TO TWO IN THE BUSH.

‘ Is not the possession of one thing,’ says the author of the ‘ Gesta Romanorum,’ ‘ better than the mere

* Castle of Indolence, st. iii. 4.

† Lachesis Lapponica, ii., 238.

‘ expectation of two?’ That is, is not one bird in the hand worth two in the bush?

It depends, altogether, upon what the bird is. Men, in fact, are always fluttering between their interests and their passions; sometimes like squirrels in a cage, and at others like flies, gnats, and bees, in the web of a spider.

XXII.

WHO NEVER REWARD THOSE THEY APPROVE.

A gentleman died in Carolina in 1784, and, having no relation, left all his property to a Mr. Ashley of that province, because his ancestor had introduced the cultivation of rice.

Many persons in the higher walks of life, when they get servants, peculiarly useful, never reward them till after a service of many years, for fear they should quit them. Some never reward them at all; but when they will go, insult them, call them ungrateful, and throw out insinuations. ‘ I do not think my father’s* maxim ‘ quite right,’ said Lord Algernon Percy to Mr. Dutens†; ‘ he said to me, this morning, If you give or ‘ procure places, let it be to those of whom you are ‘ tired; but never do any thing for those who are useful or agreeable to you; for then you lose them and ‘ their services.’

Those are best paid who amuse us, who cheat us, who destroy us; while those who live to serve us are, but too often, rewarded with ridicule, with indigence, with neglect,—nay, even with ruin!

* Smithson, Duke of Northumberland.

† Dutensiana, No. 192.

XXIII.

WHO ARE CARELESS OF FUTURITY.

MET Julius this morning, in Kensington Gardens. He made an observation I choose to record :—‘ Fear for the future is lost in the contemplation that it is for the future. That future may never come ; and if the evil should come, we still indulge the expectation that we shall find some means to avoid it, or to lessen its consequences. I, therefore, am, and ever have been, careless of future contingencies.’ To which we may observe, that Fortune is sometimes more kind to the careless than she is to the careful. There is a strange mystery in many *obvious* things !

XXIV.

WHO IN SUCCESS WEAR NEW FACES.

FLAMINIUS was both quick to resent an injury and to do a service ; and for the persons whom he had obliged he ever retained a kind regard ; ‘ as if,’ says Plutarch, ‘ instead of receiving a favour, they had conferred one.’ What a noble cast of sentiment ! Antigonus does not appear to have partaken of it. ‘ I pray the gods,’ exclaimed he, one day, ‘ to preserve me from my friends !’ Upon which one of his officers inquired, why he did not pray to be preserved from his enemies ? ‘ No !’ returned Antigonus, ‘ I can always defend myself from my enemies ; but friends can ruin us whenever they will.’

Massinissa, King of Numidia, had such an evil opinion of mankind, that, though he had fifty sons living, he declared he had less confidence in men than

in dogs ; at least, so we are assured by Valerius Maximus.

‘ Who not needs, shall never lack a friend ;
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him an enemy.’

Such is the meanness and the baseness of deceitful persons ! Honours and riches have the faculty of changing men ; but when, in prosperity, we meet an old friend with an averted face, can we expect otherwise than that we have converted an old friend into a new enemy, whose hatred we have unworthily challenged ? The heartlessness of the English and Scotch in this particular has given rise to the opprobrious reflection, that, in France and Italy, to be poor is a misfortune, while in Great Britain it is no less than a crime. If it is so, I can only say that we are the meanest of the ignorant, and the most ignorant of the mean. There are few national crimes equal to this.

An accusation has been brought not only against Prior and Swift, but Addison, that they changed their manners and their language as persons, with whom they were respectively acquainted, became elevated or depressed. Johnson, in like manner, lost all gratitude to Mrs. Thrale after she had married a person whose chief demerit was only that of being a music-master. For the most part, however, literary men are remarkable, not only for the warmth and durability of their gratitude, but for the celebrity with which they endeavour to dignify their friends and benefactors.

‘ Let go thy hold when a wheel runs down a hill,
‘ lest it break thy neck with following it ; but the great

‘one that goes up hill, lest it draw thee after.’ Such is the advice of one of Shakspeare’s fools, who qualifies the advice by exclaiming, ‘I would have none but ‘knaves follow it; since it is a fool that gives it.’

This is policy: an art which some one has defined to consist in serving God in a manner not to offend Satan. Opposed to this is Virtue. She is attractive always; but, when opposed to Policy, she is, indeed, a fine creature! and I do not know in what manner a person of good sense, fine taste, and exquisite ability, could exhibit all those qualities to the best of his interest, and therefore more to the admiration of all the more valuable portion of the community, than by making her his companion. She is Grace personified!

XXV.

ON COMPARING CONDITIONS.

NATURE has so fortunately formed us, that we can, if we please, derive a thousand pleasures:—some from sense, some from the proper exercise of our imagination, some from the enlargement of our understanding, and a thousand from the constant cultivation of our hearts, to the more enlargement of which all the others ought to contribute. In evil times it may not be unwise, or ungrateful, to look below and derive comfort—if we can!—from the condition of those less favoured than ourselves. Indeed, the state of existence, I must confess, from all that I have seen and known, is, at times, so wretched, that all things and circumstances may be resorted to for comforts that are not in

themselves dishonourable. We may even resort to the streets, and thank Heaven that we are not compelled to be beggars.

‘ In such a world, so thorny, and where none
Finds happiness unblighted, or, if found,
Without some thistly sorrow at its side ;
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguished than ourselves ; that thus
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
And sympathize with others suffering more.’—*Cowper*.

XXVI.

WHO WASTE GREAT POWERS ON SUBORDINATE SUBJECTS.

SHALL we prefer the bark to the stem, the leaves to the flower, the flower to the fruit? Shall men of high powers waste their strength on molehills rather than on mountains ; and that, too, at an age when Time proceeds against them with an eager and relentless hand? We have many instances. Whittaker, in his ‘History of Craven and Manchester;’ Bentham, in his ‘History of Ely;’ and Cervantes, in recording the fantasies and absurdities of a man who had lost his senses, in preference to the good and great deeds of one who could govern and command the capabilities of the highest. Sir William Jones, too—Oh, what a noble mind was there frittered away!

XXVII.

WHO ARE TRUE TO THE WORD, BUT FALSE TO THE SPIRIT.

JOHNSON says of the Duke of Devonshire: ‘ He was not a man of superior abilities; but he was a man strictly faithful to his word. If, for instance, he had promised you an acorn, and none had grown that year, he would not have contented himself with that excuse: he would have sent to Denmark for it.’

The following anecdote is related of a Mr. Scott, of Exeter. ‘ Mr. Scott, of Exeter, travelled on business till about eighty years of age. He was one of the most celebrated characters in the kingdom for punctuality; and by his methodical conduct, joined to uniform diligence, he gradually amassed a large fortune. For a long series of years, the proprietors of every inn he frequented in Devon and Cornwall knew the day and the very hour he would arrive. A short time before he died, a gentleman on a journey in Cornwall stopped at a small inn at Port Isaac to dine. The waiter presented him with a bill of fare, which he did not approve of, but observing a fine duck roasting, “ I’ll have that,” said the traveller. “ You cannot, sir,” said the landlord; “ it is for Mr. Scott of Exeter.” “ I know Mr. Scott very well,” rejoined the gentleman, “ he is not in your house.” “ True, sir,” said the landlord, “ but *six months ago, when he was here last, he ordered a duck to be ready for him this day, precisely at two o’clock;*” and to the astonishment of the traveller, he saw the old gentle-

‘ man jogging into the inn-yard about five minutes before the appointed time.’

Some men, however, are true to the word, and yet false to the spirit. Cromwell, as we have before stated, promised Charles I., for instance, that not a hair of his head should be touched; when his daughter, therefore, requested a lock of his majesty’s hair, the father gave that promise as an apology for not granting her request.

XXVIII.

WHO BELIEVE THEIR OWN LIES.

SOME men, as Johnson said of Foote, are very impartial, for they tell lies of every body; and some tell their own lies over so often, that at last they believe them to be true; and this reminds me of a passage in Prior’s *Alma*.

‘ Forms you cut, and forms you measure,
To gratify your private pleasure;
Till airy seeds of casual wit
Do some fantastic birth beget:
And, pleased to find your system mended
Beyond what you at first intended,
The happy whimsey you pursue,
Till you, at length, believe it true.
Caught by your own delusive art,
You fancy first, and then assert.’

A thief is not so odious as a liar:—as to malignant liars, they ought, on conviction, to be sent to the hulks.

XXIX.

WHO BREAK OFF IN THE MIDDLE.

THERE are some men who stop in the middle of all things ; even in mischief. In vain their accomplices exclaim—

‘ Shall we kindle all this flame
Only to put it out again ?
And must we now give o’er,
And only end where we begun ?
In vain this mischief we have done,
If we can do no more.’—*Denham*.

In one respect they would seem to resemble the tiger, and in others the ass. The tiger never repeats an attempt when he misses his spring ; and the ass, though he sets out briskly, yet no whip can urge him to mend his pace when once he becomes weary.

Virgil describes the agitations of a person wavering in his purposes in a very masterly manner :—

—‘ *Animum nunc huc celerem, nunc dividit illuc,
In partesque rapit varias, perque omnia versat.*’

The comparison with which he illustrates is also exceedingly beautiful.

Leonardo da Vinci’s picture of ‘ Christ disputing with the Doctors,’ if really painted by him, is no other than a failure ; for Christ was only eleven years old when the scene took place, whereas here he has indications of a beard. Neither are the features, whether of Christ or of the elders, worthy so illustrious a hand ;

and this gives us an opportunity of remembering that Lanzi informs us*, that Leonardo was never pleased if he did not execute as perfectly as he had conceived; and that, when he was unable to reach the point proposed, he sometimes conducted it only to a certain point of completion, and there left it. As to Cæsar da Testo, (one of his scholars,) he aimed at excellence, as it were, only on holidays.

XXX.

WHO UNDERTAKE TOO MUCH.

MILTON fails in all those passages of the 'Paradise Lost' where he represents the sayings and actions of God the Father. Indeed, it is astonishing that he should have presumed to make such an attempt!

Raphael, too, fails in all those attempts too mighty for the hand and skill of man: witness his picture of the Deity hallowing the seventh day as a sabbath; that where he represents the same Being looking out from a cloud while Cain and Abel are sacrificing; that where he paints the head of God overlooking the ladder of Jacob; and that in which he represents the same awful Power speaking out of the burning bush.

A short time since I saw, at Leigh Court, Leonardo da Vinci's picture of the 'Creator Mundi,' in which the Deity is holding a globe in his hand, and meditating—'Let there be light, and there was light.' This is a fine picture; highly ideal; but why will mortal man aspire to such impossible things?

* Vol. iv., p. 243.

XXXI.

WHO THINK TOO MUCH OF THE PAST.

THIS is the curse of leisure ; and the penalty paid for indolence of mind. ‘ I have, of late,’ said Johnson, ‘ turned my thoughts with a very useless earnestness upon past incidents : an unpleasant incident is almost certain to hinder my rest.’

The best antidote for this disorder is continual occupation of the head or hand. It was wise, therefore, in Sir Thomas Lawrence, to seek relief in continual occupation. ‘ I have round me,’ said he to a friend, ‘ all that ought to satisfy the solitary artist ; and, as enthusiasm is still not dead within me, I live over the days of past greatness, in the profession that I love ; and thus make the happiness I do not find.’

Indolence is the parent of melancholy ;—an agreeable occupation that of cheerfulness and content. There is, in fact, no worldly happiness equal to that arising from honest and successful industry.

XXXII.

WHO ARE ALWAYS CONCERNING THEMSELVES ABOUT THE FUTURE.

PERSONS of this sort feel never at ease or at home. They are travellers, as it were. Nothing is present but their anxieties. Watts seems to have been wiser :—

‘ I am not concern'd to know
What to-morrow's fate can do ;
'Tis enough that I can say,
I've possessed myself to-day.’

Michael, the archangel, gives an equal advice to Adam :—

————— ‘ Let no man seek
Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall
Him or his children. Evil, he may be sure,
Which neither his foreknowing can prevent ;
And he the future evil shall, no less
In apprehension than in substance, feel,
Grievous to bear.’—*Par. Lost*, b. xi. 770.

Why then know that we cannot prevent ?

Well do I remember the time when an old grey gipsy
came from her tent under the boughs of a large oak :—

‘ As o’er my palm the silver piece she drew,
And traced the line of life with searching view,
How throbb’d my fluttering pulse with hopes and fears,
To learn the colour of my future years !’

Rogers ; Pleasures of Memory.

When I met the gipsy I put faith in her prophecies ;
how truly she predicted a splendid fortune, may be now
too easily shown !

This is the boast of Satan :—

————— ‘ I lend men oft my aid,
Oft my advice by presages and signs,
And answers, oracles, portents, and dreams,
Whereby they may direct their future life.’

Par. Regained, b. i. v. 393.

XXXIII.

WHO TAKE UNFAIR ADVANTAGE OF TIME.

IN the correspondence of Wolsey with Henry VIII.,
published in the Government collection of State Papers,

we find a letter addressed to the king, asking for the see of Winchester within one hour after his hearing of the death of Fox, bishop of that see.

Taking time by the forelock is very important to worldly success ; but to be too active leads to injustice. Where the race is open for the competition of all, those who steal the start, ought never to be permitted to gain the plate.

XXXIV.

WHO TRUST TO TIME.

NONE but great minds do this : all others are impatient in the race. The greatest of men have trusted to time : witness Homer, Camoens, Cervantes, Salvatore Rosa, Domenichino, Wren, and Handel. ‘ To be neglected by their contemporaries,’ says some one, ‘ was the penalty they paid for the glory of surpassing them.’

Milton was too great for his day. From Milton to Hume the transition is scarcely to be vindicated ; but Hume had his period of neglect, also, as well as his period of fame. From the world at home he experienced, for many years, little but mortification. At one time an object of fear ; at others of hatred and rancour ; and such contempt and neglect did his writings experience, that nothing but the breaking out of a war prevented him from changing his name, forsaking his country, and retiring to a remote province in France, where he might be entirely forgotten.

In matters of fact and faith, too, philosophers must

often trust to time; time being the greatest of friends both to philosophy and fact:—

‘ Here Time’s huge fingers grasp his giant mace,
And dash proud Superstition from her base;
Rend her strong towers and gorgeous faes, and shed
The crumbling fragments round her guilty head.’

Darwin; Loves of the Plants, ii. l. 183.

Who would not encounter every species of persecution to be classed with such men as Wickliffe, Kepler, and Galileo?

XXXV.

WHOM TIME FAILS TO AVENGE.

‘ If ever man to misery was born,
’Tis mine to suffer, and ’tis mine to mourn.’

SUCH was the pathetic lament of Laertes. Who has more reason to mourn than those whose lot compels them to seek solace in the hope that posterity will do them justice? ‘ Call me cold-hearted!’ exclaimed Lord Byron. ‘ As well might you say, that glass is not brittle which has been cast down a precipice, and lies dashed to pieces at the foot!’ This may be true; but who dashed the mirror down? who but himself?

The polypus increases its numbers by being parted by a knife; hence the more numerous the divisions, the more numerous the increase. When a man makes divisions of himself, of whom has he right to complain? Posterity, if just to others, will be equally just to him.

Abuse and wrong have made me proud, and will always do so;—praise and appreciation humble.

The insight into men and things, obtained by long watching and deep sufferings, reminds me of the cir-

cumstance, that it is to the practical science of the optician, that natural philosophers are mainly indebted for their increase of knowledge in respect to astronomy, anatomy, entomology, botany, and other subjects of natural history. Knowledge is not only power, but pleasure. She sings thus :—

‘ From the high mountain’s grassy side ;
 A guiltless feast I bring ;
 A scrip with herbs and fruits supplied,
 And water from the spring.’

XXXVI.

INTRIGUERS.

PLOTINUS calls craft a defuxion of the intellect. ‘ No injury penetrates more deeply,’ we are told, ‘ than the discovery of a subtle contrivance to make us the dupe of another’s artifice.’ According to Xenophon, however, to be deceived by a friend carries with it its own apology : and it certainly does.

These observations remind me of Lord Clarendon’s characteristics of Sir Harry Vane, and John, Duke of Lauderdale ; and of what Sir William Temple says of William III. The first was of rare dissimulation, and could comply, whenever it was not seasonable to contradict, without losing ground by the condescension. He knew, in fact, how far he could go ; as a coachman knows by his splinter-bars whether or not his coach can follow ; and as a cat, by the length of her whiskers, knows whether she can creep through a hole without the risk of trusting her body.

John, Duke of Lauderdale, loved pleasure, and yet was of great parts, ‘ flattering and dissembling ; fit for intrigues and contrivances.’

Sir William Temple describes William III. as the reverse of this ; having been a man of the most decisive judgment, of the most consummate knowledge ; ‘ the sincerest man in the world, and hating all tricks and those that used them.’

Some are so cunning that they seem to have as many heads as the hydra ; as many mouths as report ; as many arms as Briareus. Sometimes they resemble the Lake of Alcyonia, which is said * to have been tranquil to the eye, and yet drew all those who ventured upon it down to its bottom. Sometimes they appear to give a point up ; but they yield, as Alpheus sunk,—to meet his Arethusa in a distant land. Cromwell’s force, for instance, lay †, not in creating or inventing opportunities, but in watching and seizing them. And Frederic the Great would frequently communicate to a third power the whole of the correspondence of the party with which he was negotiating ‡, merely for the purpose of begetting confidence, which he might betray in the end. It was, also, the policy of the Council of Ten to preach against immorality, and yet encourage dissoluteness of manners, in order to divert the public attention from public affairs. Venice, in fact, traced her power, in the fifteenth century, not to her honesty, to her resources, or to her courage ; but to the practice of supporting her armies on other men’s money, and obtaining compensations for her labours in their conquests.

Some men spread toils so long, that we are reminded of the lines set by the Russians along the coasts of

* Pausanias. † Life of Col. Hutchinson, note, p. 313, 4to.

‡ Zimmermann ; Select Views, c. ix.

Norway and Norwegian Lapland. These lines extend, sometimes, for more than two miles, along the top and bottom of the sea ; and hooks are placed not only near the surface and the bottom, but in the middle ; so that to these lines are attached sometimes not less than from six to seven hundred hooks.

Men of this sort conjure up a passage from Thomson's Castle of Indolence :—

‘ And o'er the weedy, foul, abhorred ground,
Snakes, adders, toads, each loathsome creature crawls
around.’

There is no line too long or too short for those who live by intrigue and baseness.

XXXVII.

WHO BEAR PATIENTLY.

HENRY IV. of France was frequently reduced to very great extremities. Le Grain says, he has often seen him in a coat of plain white cloth, soiled by his breast-plate, torn in the sleeves, and with stockings worn entirely through on the side on which his sword hung *. We think this state of privation very great, because it

* ‘ I am near my enemies,’ said the king, one day, to his friend and minister, the Duc de Sully ; ‘ I am very near my enemies, and hardly a horse to carry me into the battle, or a complete suit of armour to put on ; my shirts are all ragged ; my doublets are out at elbows ; my kettle is seldom on the fire ; and these two last days I have shifted for a dinner ; my purveyors having informed me that they have no longer wherewithal to furnish my table.’

was endured by a sovereign. Suppose it to last two months ; what is this to the privations of one who, after gaining some reputation, retired to a cottage, having only a small bed, two or three chairs, one table, and three or four articles of earthenware ; who often laid in bed for want of a fire during an intensely-severe winter ; who kindled his own fire when he chanced to have a few coals ; who had none in his neighbourhood with whom he could converse ; who ate nothing but dry bread, a few vegetables, and a little fruit, the product of his garden ; and who drank nothing but water, with now and then a little milk ? What was his consolation during all this period of trial ?—The consciousness, that he had done his best under all existing circumstances. I know him well.

‘ Is nothing more than purpose in thy power ?
 Thy purpose firm is equal to the deed :
 Who does the best his circumstance allows,
 Does well, acts nobly ;—angels could no more.’—*Young*.

One great preservative of the body, say some, is to keep the mind in a constant state of tranquillity. This is certainly one way of arriving at the honours of corpulency ; but no active mind can be kept in a state of constant tranquillity ; nor, indeed, any other person’s. Men often fall into an error, one way, in their endeavour to avoid one in another. We should, therefore, be frugal, temperate, discreet, and arrive at the distinction of having great command over ourselves while young. We should, also, have the virtue to look up, and speak out ; but prudently. We should remember,

too, that the leaves of the geranium and of the amber tree emit, when bruised, not only an agreeable but a fragrant odour.

Gloomy prospects may be often compared to those deep fogs, which, resting on the hills near Lima, convert dry, pulverized sand into deep mould, and thereby yield nourishment to the flocks and herds of the native Indians, at a season in which the herbage of the valley fails.

‘Tu ne cede malis; sed contra audentior ito.
Quàm tua te fortuna sinet.’—*Æn.*, vi., 95.

XXXVIII.

WHO SACRIFICE GREAT TO LITTLE.

GUICCIARDINI attributes most of the mischiefs which befell Peter de Medicis, to his vanity in trifles: but he did not sacrifice great things to these trifles, because he had not sufficient judgment to know the difference between the little and the great. With him all were great or little alike.

Duppa seasonably remarks, that when we study trifles, we sacrifice two of the best things in the world,—‘knowledge and understanding.’ Mr. Burke did not do this, but he did almost as bad; he engaged to fight the cause of a party when he was amply qualified to fight the battles of the world: hence Goldsmith justly characterized him as one,

‘Who, born for the universe, narrow’d his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.’

XXXIX.

WHO YIELD ALL THINGS TO GAIN ONE POINT.

WHEN Lord Macartney went ambassador to China, he refused to perform certain ceremonies; and Lord Amherst followed the example. Napoleon censured them;—he laughed! ‘Had I thought it worth my while to send an ambassador to China,’ said he, ‘I should have directed him to perform whatever homage was required. It is but a ceremony after all!’

The Greeks thought otherwise. Pelopidas would not prostrate himself before Artaxerxes*, and Conon refused to perform the same ceremony†, as Sperchis and Bulis had done before when introduced to Xerxes‡. Timagoras, however, was not so scrupulous. He prostrated himself; but, for so doing, the Athenians, on his return, punished him with death§.

XL.

WHO ARE SLOW TO BEGIN, AND DIFFICULT TO EXECUTE.

I have not seen more than five pictures by Sebastian del Piombo, but one of these is his masterpiece,—the Raising of Lazarus; which some are disposed to class with Raphael’s Transfiguration, and Rubens’s Descent from the Cross. The design is supposed to have been sketched by Michael Angelo, who advised Piombo to

* Plut. in Vit. Artax. Ælian. Var. Hist., i., c. 21.

† Justin, lib. vi.

‡ Herod., lib. vii.

§ Valer. Max., lib. vi.

enter the lists with Raphael, not as an historical, but as a portrait, painter. His best portraits are those of Paul III., Clement VII., Julia Gonzaga, and Aretino.

The only peculiarly personal characteristics of Piombo were an irresolution to begin, and a difficulty in executing. These characteristics are so seldom found united in men of superior genius, that I am not aware of another instance.

XLI.

WHO STAND ALONE.

'I'm like some aged mountain, that has stood
In the sea's watery bosom thousand shocks
Of threatening tempests; yet by the flattering waves,
That cling and curl about his stormy limbs,
Is undermined and ruin'd.'—*Glaphorne*.

SOME provinces, and even nations, in the midst of many changes, preserve for ages the characteristics by which they were distinguished in early periods. Thus the natives of the Biscay mountains are said still to resemble a colony of republicans rather than the members of an absolute government. Others change easily, with every wind and impulse. Awed by no principle, and undeterred even by ridicule,—that potent giant of all civilized societies!—they yet succeed in many a difficult enterprise. If the former stand like the ruins of a castle, destitute of ivy, lichen, weed, or moss, shorn of half its beauty, and destitute of half its grandeur; the latter resemble the pholas, which perforates hard surfaces by means of an organ resembling a tongue, after having softened those substances with a fluidical secretion, which exudes from its body.

Some walk, as it were, by themselves. As long as they do so, they move safely, protected by their ignorance or by their singleness of purpose; but when they join interests with others, or embrace two objects, the arch of fortune, as it were, sinks beneath them. Thus the Peruvians, in passing over the rope bridges of their mountain torrents, move quickly and alone with great facility and safety; but the moment they pause to gaze upon the water, seen through the meshes below, or lean upon the ropes that serve as rails, they become entangled with the meshes, or fall over the ropes into the torrent.

Some men delight in standing singly, let them say, do, and meditate what they will. They love to live, as it were, like the spider in its web, or the lion and hyena in their dens and deserts.

‘I have no brother; I am like no brother.

I am myself alone.’

Pope Theophylact was not quite of this order; but he stands alone in one circumstance. He sold every benefice as it became vacant:—many popes had done the same. He had not less than two thousand hunters. Perhaps some popes have had as many. But none of them ever fed them with pistachios, figs, dates, and dried grapes, steeped in wine, saturated with perfumes. Nor is such a fact as this recorded against them. One Holy Thursday*, as he was celebrating high mass, information was brought him that a favourite mare had brought forth a fine foal. Every thing fled from his holiness’s mind but this happy event. He rose from

* Fleury, *Hist. Eccl.* lv. Mosheim, ii., 93.

his knees, threw down the liturgy, ran out of the church, and flew to the stables. There, with delighted eyes, he beheld the object of his wishes ; and, having patted the mother on the back, and stroked the young stranger gently with his hand, he returned to the altar to finish the service.

————— ‘ The snail !
 Where'er he dwells, he dwells alone,
 Except himself has chattels none,
 Well satisfied to be his own
 Whole treasure !’

Some men we may compare to those parasitical plants of Trinidad and Cuba, which rise so luxuriantly around the trees, that the trees are scarcely to be distinguished from the creepers by which they are embosomed* ; others, on the other hand, may be assimilated with the air-plants of South America, which hang round the gratings of the balconies, and flower for many successive years, with no earth to sustain them.

When I was a boy, and went frequently to bathe in the river with other boys, many of the smaller would never bathe near the larger ones. Their fear was not of being drowned, but of being supposed not to be able

* Of these may be particularly mentioned the silk-cotton tree (*Bombax heptaphyllum*), which grows in the island of St. Thomas. Its branches extend one hundred and twenty feet. ‘ They are destitute of leaves, except at the extremities ; but this deficiency of foliage is amply supplied by the innumerable creepers and parasitic plants which cover its trunk and branches, and which, when in flower, by the diversity of their forms and colours, give to the whole a singular and imposing appearance.’—*Mons. Schomburgk's Paper, read at the Linnæan Society, Feb. 1834.*

to swim well enough to keep themselves from drowning. Most of these have done well in the world.

It is certain, that private ties too often moderate public enthusiasm. 'They walk with speed,' said Napoleon to Bourrienne, 'who walk alone.' He might have said, also, 'they sometimes walk too fast.'

There seems to have been some likeness between John, Earl of Bristol, as sketched by Clarendon, and Lord Chatham, as drawn by Mr. Grattan. 'Lord Bristol,' says Clarendon, 'was a man of great parts, and a wise man; yet he had been, for the most part, single and by himself in business, which he managed by himself with good sufficiency. But he had lived little in consort, so that, in council, he was *passionate* and *supercilious*:' and thus Grattan of Lord Chatham;—'The ordinary feelings that make life amiable and indolent, those sensations, which soften and allure, and vulgarize, were unknown to him. No domestic difficulties, no domestic comforts, reached him; but aloof from the sordid difficulties of life, and unsullied by its intercourse, he came, occasionally, into our system, to counsel and to decide.' He, too, from standing alone, was *passionate and supercilious*.

Those who stand alone, are apt to be ignorant and shallow; therefore presumptuous and arrogant. As to reward, the poet is a philosopher who reasons thus:

————— 'The reward
Is in the race we run; not in the prize.'—*Rogers*, p. 206.

Unless, indeed, the obtainment of that prize leads us to another race: which is often, perhaps too often, the case; more especially in age.

If it is agreeable, in some respects, to resemble the vine, the jessamine, the clematis, and the honeysuckle, in being supported by a stronger step, still more delightful is it to breathe the air of labour, and like the goat and the hind,—

‘ Walk unsustain’d, and unassisted feed.
 They live at once ; forsake the dam’s warm side ;
 Take the wide world, with Nature for their guide ;
 Bound o’er the lawn, or seek the distant glade ;
 And find a home in each delightful shade.’—*Young*.

In some respects it is the best of fortunes to be left to ourselves ; always so in philosophy, if capable of first principles.

XLII.

MEN OF MERE PLAUSIBILITY.

SOME men are loquacious, plausible, adroit, and subtle ; but their loquacity creates enemies ; their plausibility the victory of an hour ; their adroitness the success of a day ; their subtlety—sometimes—the ruin of years.

XLIII.

WHO HAVE STRENGTH AND NO POWER TO COMMUNICATE IT.

It is fortunate for mankind, that many skilful men possess neither the opportunity nor the industry to bring bad designs to successful issues. To some both are wanting ; to others only one. Thus Goring, in the days of the parliament (at least so Clarendon assures

us), would, without hesitation, and even with pleasantry, have broken any trust, or have been guilty of any treachery whatever, to satisfy even an ordinary passion or appetite. In fact, that to have been as eminent in the highest attempt of wickedness, as any man of his age, he wanted nothing but industry.

Some are strong, but without power to communicate their strength; having but a limited command of all the mechanism belonging to their capability. Others are not only strong, but enjoy the faculty of communicating their energy to every one that approaches them. Of the former, we may instance Fabius Maximus; of the latter, Cæsar, Cromwell, and Frederic of Prussia.

XLIV.

WHO KEEP THE BEST GUN TILL THE LAST.

PASSED over from Southampton to Cowes. On landing observed two women quarrelling about an old red cloak. At length one of them seized it from the person who held it, and ran away with it; on which the other exclaimed:—‘Take it and keep it till the day you are hanged.’

This language was sufficiently coarse; but it served to remind me of ‘the ragged cloth recovered*,’ by Lorenzo Lippi, the friendly rival of Salvator Rosa, whose maxim it was to write poetry as he thought; and to paint those scenes only which he had himself seen.

Nothing more occurred this day worthy of recording,

* Malmantile Racquistato.

except an observation by the master of the boat:—
'Keep your best gun till the last, and then fire.'

Here we have the maxim so skilfully acted upon by the celebrated polemic, Sirmond. He never used his great argument till he had exhausted all his little ones. He was violent in warfare; the bishop of Avranches speaks of him as having been, nevertheless, distinguished by uncommon courtesy of disposition and elegance of manners.

XLV.

WHO ARE ACTIVE IN DRIVING OTHERS OUT.

THERE are some men on the continent, who are constantly reminding the readers of Erasmus of a passage in one of that keen observer's letters to Ammonius of Lucca. 'Be ashamed of nothing,' said he; 'thrust yourself into every one's business; give no quarter; elbow out whoever you can; supplant every one; measure your love and your hatred with your profits; give nothing but to such as will return it with usury; be complaisant to every one, and in every thing; and have, always, two strings to your bow.'

As Erasmus knew the full value of his ironical advice, we might almost suppose the learned friend of the Lord Chancellor More to have passed a few years north of the Tweed and the Clyde. It is certain, however, that he never visited the Liffy, the Bandon, or the Shannon.

XLVI.

NOBLE ENEMIES.

NEITHER Darius nor Xerxes meditated attempts upon Greece till they had conquered Egypt. It was the opinion, therefore, of all the more eminent Greek statesmen, that Greece should, at all times, be alive to the danger of Persia's possessing Egypt. We cannot, in fact, be too watchful against enemies.

When Cæsar went into Spain he declared himself little at issue; for that he marched against an army that had no general; affecting to account Afranius and Petreius as mere nonentities. When he marched against Pompey, however, his tone differed: for he then declared that he was marching against a general without an army. Cæsar believed neither of these assertions; and if he did, he was mistaken; for he had some trouble in Spain; and the general, without an army, was the first to fly.

What a delightful thing it is, if we must have enemies, to have them of noble and considerate minds! The second William Pitt was so; and hence he is more to be admired out of office than in. 'I promise the ministers, by whom I am superseded, my uniform and best support on any occasion, where I can honestly and conscientiously assist them.' He acted as he promised.

Lamentable was the misfortune both to himself and to his country, that Pitt should have experienced the fatality of being educated in a college*; of entering into

* He was the first Greek scholar of his standing at Cambridge. This circumstance is, of itself, sufficient to show how much time

public life too soon* ; and of falling, at last, into the hands of a party ; when he possessed a genius sufficient to have commanded the admiration of all true men to the remotest period of time ! As it is, he descends to posterity as a man idolized by a highly respectable party ; but as having been essentially unequal to the critical period in which he lived. A Washington might have wept for him !

The lion, in Cowley's ' Davideis,' seeing a herd of kine, disdains to fall upon them :—

—' He scorns so weak, so cheap a prey,
And grieves to see them trembling haste away.'

The finest antiquities of Spain are those left by the Moors ; its invaders, its conquerors, its usurpers. The Spaniards detest the memory of the Moors ; but they cherish the monuments they left. They hate the Moors as enemies to all that was dear to them in life, their country, their language, and their religion ; yet they do not disdain to associate their own idleness with their glory.

Many men regard their friends as enemies, and their he had been permitted to sacrifice. Taylor, the Platonist, told me this ; adding, sarcastically—' They should have made him Greek Professor !'

* He was made first minister at *twenty-three* !—not the first minister of a German duchy ; but the first minister of an empire, having interests in every country on the globe. There never existed an empire so complicated in its relations as this ; and no station, therefore, ever required such multifarious qualities, and such length, width, and depth of information and experience, as that of its first minister. At twenty-three a man, comparatively speaking, has scarcely learnt the practical use of a compass.

enemies as friends. They esteem, as it were, Abram, Isaac, and Jacob, as devils; and worship Dathan, Caiphas, and Judas.

Some use their friends in a manner truly unwarrantable. The Duke of Newcastle acted so. We are even told that he caressed his enemies in order to enlist them against his friends. ‘There was no service,’ says Walpole; ‘he would not do for either, till either was above being served by him. Then he thought they did not love him enough; for the moment they had every reason to love him, he took every method to obtain their hate, by exerting all his power for their ruin.’

If this were true, the Duke of Newcastle must have been one of the most odious and detestable of mankind. But, really, Walpole seems to have been a wasp, so incessant in the application of his sting, that we sometimes know not what to think or what to believe.

XLVII.

HEROIC UNTRUTHS.

CAN any characteristic under heaven be more contemptible in a hero than that of Napoleon, as delineated by his secretary? and yet what a multitude of admirers has this man had, and still has, in every part of Europe!

‘He never hesitated to pervert the truth, when the truth would have diminished his glory. He called it folly to do otherwise. And I here, once for all, state that the whole truth never entered into his dispatches, when veracity was in the least unfavourable. He knew how to disguise, or alter, or conceal it altogether, as suited his purposes. He often changed even such communications of others as he caused to be printed,

‘ whenever these traversed his views ; or would have reflected upon his reputation or actions, or on the opinion which he desired should be entertained of his fame and achievements.’ I have inquired, can any thing under heaven be more contemptible in a hero than such conduct as this ? No ! I do not intend to make any such inquiry. Well do I know the mean aspirations of the whole class of such persons. They have all been guilty of conduct like unto this from Sesostris to Alexander ; from Alexander to Cæsar ; from Cæsar to Frederic the Great. Nor is this their worst ! Their every step, their every hope, their every thought and impulse had this extent :—*all men are mine !* Had I a shell,— ‘ a deep and loud-resounding shell,’—I would echo to the winds of heaven :—

‘ No men like these shall ever reign again.’

XLVIII.

POPE ALEXANDER VI. ; BORGIA ; AND LOUIS XI.

OF Pope Alexander VI., and his son, Cæsar Borgia, the Italians were accustomed to assert, that if the one never did what he said, the other never said what he did : their fundamental rule, as Frederic of Prussia has it, being ‘ to give their faith to every man, and to keep it with none.’ Hence many worthy persons have attributed their successes to the ingenuity of their wickedness : more especially (as Machiavel seems to have known) that they knew well, not only how to deceive, but how to attack all with whom they had any dealings, on the weak side ; the sole business and aim of both being to cheat and cozen mankind.

But this, with humility, is only gliding on the surface of things. Pope Alexander, it is true, succeeded to a considerable extent; but less by his own cunning than by the credulity of others, the complexion of the times in which he lived, the animosities of Italian princes, and the rivalry of neighbouring powers. These were his friends!

In respect to his son, Amelot de la Houssage seems to regard him as a good model for usurpers, though not for hereditary princes. In this I think M. de la Houssage very much mistaken; the model being quite as dangerous for the one as it is for the other.

In reference to this prince and the cardinals he had disobliged, it has been insinuated that men are as mischievous from fear as they are from hatred. The canon may be illustrated by referring to Louis XI., who inflicted all manner of punishments, in order to create a fear of him, and that he might run no chance of rebellion. For this reason, as Philip de Comines rightly asserts*, 'he would make and unmake just whom he pleased; appoint and displace ministers, dispossess pensioners, and cashier officers so often and so wantonly, that no king ever engaged more the conversation,' and he might have added, the hatred, 'of his poor unfortunate subjects.'

It could not be said of Louis XI.,

'Without one virtue to redeem his fame†;'

but that, like Philip II.

'He left a name to all succeeding times,

Link'd with one virtue, and a thousand crimes‡.'

* Mémoires, iii. c. 8.

† Duke, from Juvenal, iv. 2.

‡ 'He united,' says Boulainvilliers, 'all the odious qualities of

The castle of Chinon, standing on the right bank of the Vienne, once a formidable fortress, is still an object of great interest to those who deeply muse upon the history of mankind. For this was the favourite residence of that king of England (Henry II.) who within those walls died—cursing his undutiful children! Here, too, his son, Richard Cœur de Lion, died ten years after. Charles VII. of France lived there, also; and the room is still shown in which the Maid of Orleans pointed him out from his nobles: and within those walls Louis XI. proposed to the Comte de Chabannes the assassination of his father.

Beneath the apartment in which this king usually sat was a dungeon; and he had a hole in the wall of the fire-place, by means of which he could sit and listen to the sighs, tears, and groans of his unfortunate victims; and in this dungeon, a considerable time after, was found by Pontbriandt, governor of the château, the skeleton of a man sitting on a stone bench, leaning his head on his hands. On approaching near to this once unfortunate person, the governor ventured to touch him, when the skeleton, of large dimensions, fell from the pressure. The flesh and the garments were a heap of dust below*.

‘ several of his family: the fierce and bloody temper of John and Philip of Valois; the foresight of Charles V.; the prodigality of Louis of Anjou; the perfidy of Isabella of Bavaria; and the mistrustful temper of his father, Charles VII.’

* Montesquieu wrote the history of Louis XI., but his secretary burnt it by mistake.

XLIX.

WHO ADVANCE THEIR INTERESTS BY PROMISES.

THE Emperor of Germany was advised by Kaunitz to give the natives of Brabant kind words. He therefore directed his officers of trust and authority to keep them in good humour by balls and all manner of amusements. Upon this the discontented party advised their friends not to sell their birth-right for a mess of pottage.

When the Poles, resident at Paris, awoke from their delusion of hope, that France would reinstate them in their own country,—on the signing of a peace with Prussia, and the guaranteeing to that power the whole of its Polish usurpations, they remonstrated, and were soothed with a declaration (1795), that a peace with Prussia was only a matter of expediency for the present, and could not last long;—a war must ensue; and when it did, France would wrest Poland from the Prussian grasp, and restore it to independence*. How this promise was kept every one, unfortunately, knows.

Some men seem to take lessons from that part of Machiavel's 'Principio,' where it is written, that since an honest man must go to ruin in the midst of those who are otherwise, a prince ought to be able to use his honesty, or lay it aside, just as his necessities or his interests may require. Upon this principle, a man may be sincere or insincere, faithful and unfaithful, honest or dishonest, at his own discretion; policy and expediency being the only deities he is bound to respect!

* Ozinski, *Mémoires sur la Pologne et les Polonais*, t. ii., p. 92.

There are two orders of characters, which may be exemplified by recurring to Lord Clarendon's Notes, in respect to Wilmot and Goring. Wilmot violated promises and professions, but only for some great benefit or convenience; Goring, without scruple, out of humour, or for the sake of displaying his wit. He loved no man so well, but he would cozen him; and not only that, but expose him to mirth for having been cozened.

Those who promise largely and freely are seldom to be trusted in any thing; much less if they chance to be persons of political consideration; promises with them being but too often mere bills of exchange, which, as they seldom expect to be ever able to honour, they are almost ever totally indifferent about.

‘ It is no scandal, nor aspersion,
Upon a great and noble person,
To say, he naturally abhorr'd
Th' old-fashioned trick to keep his word;
Though 'tis perfidiousness and shame
In meaner men to do the same.’

The practice, however, is not so common now, as it was in the time of Sir Robert Walpole; and it must be conceded, that men are made to act by words of promise sooner than by deeds of promise. It is, thence, wise never to pay beforehand for a deed which requires some sacrifice either of labour, convenience, pleasure, or time. Promise the reward,—and labour, convenience, pleasure, and time, will be all cheerfully sacrificed and granted. You can then not only afford to pay the promise, but compound interest arising from delay; for the deed will not only be done, but, most probably, done well.

L.

WHO DOUBT VERACITY.

MEN, who know their own veracity, always suspect those who doubt theirs. If it is necessary to be cautious in what we say, it is equally so to be upon our guard in what we shall believe; particularly in an age when, in the dread of infidelity, preachers seem more solicitous to have their congregations believe well than act well. Many, therefore, have devotion in belief, without either piety of sentiment or charity of action.

It requires great skill to tell an exact truth; truth not being so plain as most men assert. Many of what we call truths are merely apparent ones; and all persons are not gifted with powers of discrimination to observe the difference; nor are all endowed with the faculty of precisely stating what they clearly know. A thousand untruths are told by great lovers of truth, and they themselves no wiser. Indeed, scarcely any thing we hear is truth, unmagnified or undiminished. There is always something too much, or something too little.

LI.

LORD TOWNSEND AND LORD GRANVILLE.

LORD CHESTERFIELD says of Lord Granville, that he had a wonderful quickness and precision 'in *seizing the stress of a question*,' and which no art or sophistry could disguise from him. Lord Townsend, too, was always *near the stress of the question*; but then, according to the same authority, he was an ungraceful

and confused speaker, inelegant in his language, and perplexed in his arguments.

In the latter part of this appreciation Lord Townsend seems to have resembled the late Duke of Newcastle.

LII.

WHO ACT UNWISELY ON A GREAT MAN'S LESSON.

'IF I were a gentleman of property, sir,' said Dr. Johnson, 'I would turn out all my tenants who did not vote for the candidate whom I supported.' 'But, would not that be checking the freedom of election?' inquired Mr. Langton. 'Sir, the law does not mean that the privilege of voting should be independent of old family interest; of the permanent property of the country.' This was spoken not only by a man of great intellectual qualifications, but by a great moralist. And the present Duke of Newcastle and the Marquis of Exeter having acted* in conformity with the precept, they acted for their enemies, and more accelerated reform by the indignation they excited, than the best argument advanced in its support by any of their adversaries.

To hate men in the height of power is less universal than to hate them in the depth of tyranny. A wish for liberty is often but the mere hatred of control; but it is said of Lord ——'s brother, that, if he is devoted to the cause of liberty, it is not because he is haughty and intractable, but because he is wise, beneficent, and humane.

* A.D. 1829-30.

LIII.

WHO CANNOT CONFINE THEMSELVES TO ONE OBJECT.

SOME men's minds are so rapid and excursive, that they cannot command a prescriptive attention to any one object whatever. They have no singleness of purpose.

Such was one of the characteristics of Hooke. The number of things that engaged his mind at the same time was astonishing; hence few of his inventions were brought to perfection; and hence his anticipations of Newton, which, I hope, will one day be fairly acknowledged, were lost in the blaze of that celebrated philosopher. Could Hooke have concentrated his powers, he had, probably, been—as a natural philosopher—second to none this empire has produced.

LIV.

WHO BEAR EVIL ACCIDENTS WITH PROPRIETY.

—————' Perturbations, griefs, doubts, fears,
Innumerable conflicts, agonies,
Watchings, laborious studies, and disputes.'—*Milton*.

No people in the world bear hunger, thirst, cold, and poverty better than the Swedes. The English are, by no means, remarkable for bearing evil accidents with philosophy; yet they seem not always indisposed to acknowledge—that he should be esteemed one of the best of men, who bears inconveniences with the cheerfulness of true faith, and masters the most difficulties by honest and honourable endeavour.

Misfortune engenders good from every part; as

honey, in some plants, is exuded not only from the flower, but the flower-stalk.

Prosperity, after a season of adversity, is even more delightful than the fine return of morning in the spring, after a violent, tempestuous, and dangerous night on the bosom of the Caspian Sea.

LV.

WHO ACT FOR YEARS CONTRARY TO THEIR OWN OPINIONS.

LORD NORTH did!

Sir Grey Cooper, Bart., was for nearly seventeen years Secretary to the Treasury. He was appointed by the Marquis of Rockingham; and continued during the whole of the Grafton and North administrations.

He was Lord North's right hand, as it were. He lived, during the whole of his retirement, in our village; and I remember his telling my father, that Lord North carried on the American war for three years longer than it was his opinion that it ought to be carried on. 'Wherefore?' 'In obedience to his father;—not to disoblige the king.' 'Had my father given me such an advice,' was the answer, 'I would have *disobeyed* him.'

Two and forty years ago! and yet I remember this conversation as well as if it had occurred but yesterday; the idea of *disobeying a father* having impressed it beyond all power of forgetfulness. I not only heard it myself, but a person, still living, heard it also.

It is lamentable to see on what feeble reeds the fortunes of the world rest!

LVI.

THE PATIENT.

ST. PIERRE calls patience 'the courage of virtue; and certain it is, that almost every fortune is to be conquered by patience *.

As the lion is patient of hunger, but impatient of thirst, so some men are patient of injury, and yet impatient of insult. Characters, less worthy, are more patient of insult than of injury. Others act so boldly under difficulties and slights, and rise so far above both, that we are reminded of a passage in Tertullian :—
'The more you mow us down, the thicker we rise: the Christian blood you spill is like the seed you sow. It springs from the earth again, and fructifies the more.'

Villiers de L'Isle-Adam, grand master of the knights of Malta †, bore his misfortunes so bravely, constantly, mildly, and in a manner so worthy of admiration, that his knights placed over his tomb, 'Here lies virtue victorious over fortune.' Men, who cannot sympathize with misfortune, cannot be truly indignant against baseness; and those, who cannot feel for an honourable man in distress, whether of mind, of body, or of fortune, are unworthy to live. The followers of Mahomet are the most patient of men. Such is the consequence of a firm belief in predestination. 'Oh, true believers!' says the Koran, 'be constant-minded, and fear God, and ye may be happy.'

Patience, perseverance, and vigour, are the three

* 'Quicquid erit, superanda omnis fortuna ferendo est.'—*Æn.*, v., 710.

† Vertot, ii., 61.

essences, as it were, of which honourable ambition is composed and maintained. It is, however, true, that men are, from their inconstancy*, more capable of obtaining their ends by vigorous efforts, than by long perseverance.

Patience under privation is a divine quality. Disappointment is a melancholy tutor; but frequent disappointment is the parent of patience. Hence we bear those pains best to which we have been most accustomed. Hence it arises that some sustain mental pains better than bodily ones; and others bodily pains better than those of the mind. But that, in general, bodily pain is the less easy to bear, is proved by the circumstance, that, before a mental pain can be felt at all, a great bodily one must be relieved. As to misfortune, it has this one excellence:

‘He cannot be esteemed a perfect man,
Who is not tried, and tutor’d in the world:’

and no one can be so, who has not been subject, not only to a few misfortunes, but a multitude. This is one commanding reason why the rich and the great are, for the most part, so heartless as they are.

LVII.

WHO CUT WEBS OF THEIR OWN SPINNING.

ABLE men do this every now and then, unknowingly. Clarendon is an example. He first advised an impolitic and unnecessary war with the Dutch; and, after many years of warfare, concluded it with making an equally disgraceful and impolitic peace.

* La Bruyère,

LVIII.

WHO CAN ADOPT WORDS TO OCCASIONS.

RICCIOLI summed up the evidence, for and against, the Copernican system of philosophy; not according to the weight, but the quantity of arguments; and men frequently judge of deeds and motives after the same manner. Henry V. was a better king than he had been son or subject; his general characteristics were candour, affability, sincerity, clemency, courage, magnanimity, and a love of justice; all these qualities are strictly in accordance with a noble ambition. I shall not insist upon his *vices*; because they are better known as his *virtues*! I shall merely revert to his answer to the Cardinal des Ursins, who seeing how far his ambition was about to lead him, endeavoured to dissuade him from attempting to seize the throne of France. ‘Do you not see, my good Lord Cardinal,’ returned Henry, ‘that God has led me hither, as it were, by the hand? France has no sovereign; and every thing is in the greatest state of confusion. No one even thinks of resisting me in any way. Can I have a more evident proof that the Being, who disposes of empires as pleases him most, has resolved on putting the crown upon my head?’ It was not possible to frame an answer more suited to the person to whom it was addressed; or more likely to have been effective with the general mass of society, at that particular time;—perhaps even at the present.

Framing speeches for occasions is very useful and

exceedingly politic ; but it is not pleasing to be flattered by those, who, like courtiers and members at election balls, labour to say something agreeable to every one in company. We cannot, however, refrain from comparing such conduct, as it respects most people, to the laurel-leaved Canella, which is so exceedingly aromatic, when it blossoms, that it perfumes the whole of its neighbourhood.

LIX.

THE OBSEQUIOUS AND TREACHEROUS.

AN obsequious man is, generally, a treacherous one : a position we may illustrate, from a thousand, by referring to the example of William, second Earl of Salisbury. This nobleman was descended from strict and honourable parents ; yet he bore so little affinity to them in conduct, in sentiment, or in manners, that Lord Clarendon assures us, that when he was admitted into the council, he was so obsequious to whatever King Charles proposed, that he not only voted, but acted, in a manner the most likely to please him and his ministers, even to the extremity of rigour. But, when the tide of affairs began to turn, he turned too ; and concurred in every measure proposed against both. Yet he accompanied his majesty to York ; where, for some time, he coincided with all his councils ; but, receiving some adverse intelligence, he fled from the town on horseback ; and having relays on the road, reached London in safety, where he finished his career of obsequiousness by assisting to carry on the war against his unfortunate master—he to whom he had sworn a thousand oaths of fidelity !

LX.

WHO SPLIT STRAWS.

SOME men's arguments are set forth so mildly, modestly, and good-humouredly, that, illogical as they may be, we admit them for the sake of the man. The positions of others are, sometimes, thrust upon us with so much violence and dictatorial impertinence, that, unanswerable as they may be, we feel disposed to be at war with them, because our feelings are at war with those who utter them.

‘ Sicut aquæ tremulum labris ubi lumen ahenis
Sole repressum, aut radiantis imagine Lunæ,
Omnia pervolitat latè loca, jamque sub auras
Erigitur, summique ferit laquearia tecti.’

If there are some, who will give up an argument in a moment, rather than encounter the smallest opposition, others will argue for three hours, and quarrel for three years, for the nine hundred and ninety-ninth part of a gnat's toe! Lord Chesterfield says of Lord Bolingbroke, that though he received attentions of civility as obligations, and returned them as such, with interest, yet a difference of opinion, upon a philosophical subject, would prove him no practical philosopher at least; but philosophy is more than a cheat if she will not allow us to put up with something more than mere differences in opinion.

I seldom think of those who split straws, but I remember Turner's picture* of a Blacksmith's shop, in which a butcher is represented disputing the charge

* In the collection of Sir John Leicester.

for shoeing his pony. Hotspur was of this description :—

————— ‘ I’ll give thrice so much land
To any well-deserving friend :
But in the way of business, mark me well,
I’ll cavil on the ninth part of a hair.’

LXI.

WHO WILL NOT BE LED.

SOME persons remind us of what has been said in regard to the style of Sir Thomas Browne :— ‘ vigorous, but rugged ; learned, but pedantic ; deep, but obscure ; it strikes, but does not please ; it commands, but does not allure.’

Some are of such an easy and confiding nature, that their companions have the power to lead or draw them into any thing :—

————— ‘ Alas ! I’ll wager with your wisdom,
His consorts drew him to it ; for of himself
He is both virtuous, bashful, innocent.’

Chapman ; All Fools, act v. sc. 1.

Just the reverse are those, who, if we would tame them, it is necessary to remember, that—

————— ‘ Those, that tame wild horses,
Pace them not in their hands to make them gentle ;
But stop their mouths with stubborn bits, and spur them,
Till they obey the manage.’—*Henry VIII. act. ii. sc. 2.*

LXII.

WHO LET OTHERS DICTATE.

BEING one day (1809) at Canons*, the proprietor, who, in former times, had been one of the most intimate associates of his majesty, George IV., when Prince of Wales, took me aside :—‘ I was not very well pleased with you,’ said he, ‘ to see how distantly you received the prof-
 ‘ fered hand of Mr. G—— the other evening. It was
 ‘ unlike a man of the world. Take my advice, and follow
 ‘ my plan: *let others set the distance*. I never take
 ‘ the lead in any thing. I bend, as I am bent to. If
 ‘ men are easy and pliant, I am easy and pliant. If
 ‘ they are distant, I am distant. If they smile, I smile.
 ‘ If they frown, I frown. If they flatter, I flatter. If
 ‘ they are sarcastic, I am sarcastic too. If they bow, I
 ‘ bow. If they pass on straight, I do the same.’

Frederic the Great always retaliated any coolness, adopted towards his ambassadors at foreign courts, by adopting the same line of conduct to the foreign ambassadors at his own. If foreign princes smiled upon his agent diplomatique, he smiled in return at theirs. And this reminds me of a letter, written by Lord Barrington in 1761, to Sir Andrew Mitchell: ‘ The same fortune,’ says his lordship, ‘ which made me Secretary at War,
 ‘ five years and a half ago, has made me Chancellor of
 ‘ the Exchequer. It may, perhaps, at last, make me
 ‘ Pope. I think I am equally fit to be at the head
 ‘ of the church. My reason tells me it would have been
 ‘ more proper to have given me an employment of less

* Once the seat of the Duke of Chandos, whom Pope is supposed to have satirized under the character of Timon.

‘ consequence, when I was removed from the war office ;
 ‘ but no man knows what is good for him. My inva-
 ‘ riable rule, therefore, is, to refuse nothing ; to let
 ‘ others place me ; and to do my best wherever I
 ‘ am placed *.’

It must be confessed, that Lord Barrington was not altogether unacquainted with the best method of securing employment for a man of rank, who has but a little interest to command results to his wishes.

LXIII.

WHO TAKE MIDDLE COURSES.

OID says, ‘ Medio tutissimus ibis ;’ but Tacitus, ‘ Media sequitur quod inter ancipitia teterrimum est †.’ These two passages direct our mental eye to what Amelot de la Houssaie ‡ says in respect to Venice. ‘ That state,’ says he, ‘ is subject, upon any ill conjuncture of their affairs, to take the middle way, which is, commonly, the worst. That is, of two counsels proposed, one generous and brave, the other poor and pusillanimous, they form a third out of both, without examining their incompatibility or danger.’ This line of conduct may be generally safe ; but it is not only, every now and then, unsafe, but even contemptible.

The habit, however, is occasionally carried into the bosom of philosophy ; and to this end a passage may be quoted with advantage from Pope’s Essay on Man :—

‘ Placed in this isthmus of a middle state,
 A being darkly wise, and rudely great ;

* Mitchell Papers, vol. xxxv. fol. 29.

† Ann. xv.

‡ On the government of Venice, p. 264.

With too much knowledge for the sceptic's side,
 With too much weakness for the stoic's pride,
 He hangs between; in doubt to act or rest;
 In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast;
 In doubt his mind or body to prefer,
 Born but to die, and reasoning but to err.'

LXIV.

WHO SELDOM RETURN BOWS.

THE influence of a bow from a great man to a little one is very great; the withholding of a bow by a little man from a great one is, sometimes, even of ruinous consequences. In a village, the baker, who withholds his bow, no longer serves the house. A bow from a member of parliament commands the continuance of a vote.

Even republicans love the bow 'obsequious:' hence Milton makes a bow not only a custom in hell, but even in heaven:—

—————'Satan, bowing low,
 As to superior spirits is wont in heaven,
 Where honour due and reverence none neglect,
 Took leave.'—*Par. Lost*, b. iii. 736.

Adám adopts the custom, as from instinct; for he had none to learn of:—

'Nearer his presence, Adam, though not awed,
 Yet with submissive approach and reverence meek,
 As to a superior nature, bowing low,
 Thus said.'—*Par. Lost*, b. v. 358.

The squire, who returns no bow to those of his village, will have no tears from the poor wherewith his grave can be watered. And what so affecting to the soul as the anticipated tears of the poor? He who disdains them—let nettles and thistles cover his ashes!

LXV.

ROUNDAABOUT QUESTIONERS.

YESTERDAY, in company with Mr. L——. As we came out, Junius inquired whether I knew the cause of L——'s asking me such and such questions. 'They were very unimportant ones,' answered I. 'Not quite so unimportant,' said Junius. 'He wished to know whether Mr. Mackenzie had been at your house lately; but as he can never ask a direct question, he inquired whether you did not meet Mrs. Mackenzie at Gloucester some years ago. This would lead you to speak of Mr. Mackenzie; and if he had been at your house yesterday, it was very probable that you would have said so. He asks questions sometimes ten miles off the subject he is earnest about; but those questions, distant as they appear, will answer the immediate ones he wishes to have solved. He once asked me, casually as it appeared, what English gentlemen I had known at Lisbon during the short time I staid there. I enumerated the whole; and at last mentioned the name of Mr. Fitzackerley. I saw by his countenance, that Mr. Fitzackerley was the person he wished to inquire about; but he could no more have mentioned his name in the first instance than he could have flown into the air.'

Madame d'Epinay was, in some degree, of this class. 'Never did human being,' says Grimm*, 'possess, in reater perfection, the art of eliciting from others,

* Mem. vol. i. p. 151.

‘without art or indiscretion, what it was essential or desirable to know.’ ‘Nothing that was said,’ he continues, ‘was ever lost upon her; and she frequently availed herself of a random word to give that turn to the conversation which interested most.’

LXVI.

WHO STOOP TO CONQUER.

THE way to catch sturgeons is to fasten a net at the mouth of a river, in a manner that, whether the tide ebbs or flows, the pouch goes with the stream. Here we have the art of a true and thorough-bred politician. When they succeed, however, they frequently pay too few compliments to fortune:—

‘Hence, hence, their tide of fortune leaves the shore,
And ebbs much faster than it flowed before.’

Some gain progress by affecting to follow; knowing that should one sheep bound, it is a thousand to one but all the others will bound too, even should there be nothing to bound over. Of this, or something like it, Mr. Burke accused the once celebrated Charles Townshend*. ‘He hit the house just between wind and water. He was always in unison with his hearers; and he seemed to guide the house because he was always sure to follow it.’

This practice is not always dishonourable; it is, indeed, sometimes expedient to an honourable purpose.

Homer, who knew the human heart better than any

* Debates House Commons, April 19, 1774.

one that has lived since, if we except Shakspeare, gives a beautiful instance of this art in the person of Chrysis. The object of the high-priest was to regain his daughter; how, then, does he attempt to conciliate the adversaries of his sovereign?

‘ May Jove restore you when your toils are o’er,
Safe to the pleasures of your native shore !’

Then comes the prayer :—

‘ But, oh ! relieve a wretched parent’s pain,
And give Chryseis to these arms again.’—*Iliad*, i. l. 25.

The Romans stooped in having only one enemy at a time. When they designed to make war upon one, they were in the constant practice of making peace with another. This was certainly stooping to some purpose; but Peter of Russia stooped in another way. This wonderful man became a labourer in a ship-yard, where he lived with the men on terms of equality. He ate with them; used the same food; dressed as they did; and worked in the mills, forges, and rope-walks. The men were confounded, at first, in having an emperor for a comrade; but they recovered after a time; and, with some allowance, treated him with nearly as much familiarity as they would one of their own comrades. He afterwards learned, not only astronomy, but anatomy, engineering, spinning of ropes, watch-making, and the art of casting cannon. The full use he made of all this, and the relative consequences, are known to few but experienced political economists. ;

LXVII.

WHO ARE DUPED ONLY IN APPEARANCE.

THE surest way, we are told, to make a dupe is to let your victim suppose that you are his. Frederic the Great got, at the partition of Poland, less in land and in population than either Russia or Austria. Hence many persons thought that his Prussian Majesty had permitted himself to be duped. The king, however, knew very well what he was about. His grand object was the Vistula. Wherefore? Because, by having command of that river, he could, at any time, shut up a great part of the commerce of his rivals. For as all the produce of Poland passes up that river, while he could himself convey all kinds of stores and ammunition to the remotest parts of the country, he could, by seizing, in transitu, paralyze, at his option, the entire commerce of his enemies in the interior. We may, therefore, say of Frederic, that he was duped only in appearance.

I confess my foible: it is a great pleasure to me to let crafty persons go away with an impression of my being deceived. I see into their plots, calculate their designs, and, when they agree with my own wishes, as they sometimes do, take no pains, of course, to counteract them. When they do not, I suffer them to fall quietly into the teeth of their own traps. Shutting our eyes is, in fact, sometimes the very best method of seeing.

LXVIII.

WHO CONQUER ARGUMENTS BY NOT NOTICING THEM.

IN the House of Commons, it is no very unfrequent practice for speakers to neglect all those arguments of their adversaries which carry irresistible conviction, and entirely to mis-state or misrepresent the remainder. In doing this, however, they leave the arguments which remain unanswered to the adoption of the public, and thus become entangled, not in webs of their own spinning, but in those spun by their adversaries.

The easiest, but one of the most ignoble, ways to get rid of a just complaint, or the charge of not fulfilling an agreement, is to give no answer. And this is the almost general practice of those who stand self-condemned.

LXIX.

WHO AFFECT ILLNESS.

ROUSSEAU seems, occasionally, to have done this. ‘Rousseau imagines himself very infirm,’ wrote Hume the historian to the Countess de Boufflers* ; ‘yet he is ‘one of the most robust men I ever knew. He passed ‘ten hours in the night twice above deck, during the ‘most severe weather, when all the seamen were almost ‘frozen to death, and he caught no harm.’ He feigned being ill on various occasions.

Statesmen also have done the same. Mary de’ Medicis, when examined before the presidents of the parliament of Paris, said of Richelieu,—‘He is the great-

* January 19, 1766.

‘est dissembler that ever lived upon earth! He can seem to be anything he pleases; he can look one moment as if he were dying, and the next as if he never could die.’

Some, even grave, persons do thus, and this merely to answer the purposes of a day. Grattan accused Flood of this quackery; and Horace Walpole brings a similar charge against Lord Chatham. ‘The weather was unseasonably warm,’ says he, ‘yet he was dressed in an old coat and waistcoat of beaver, laced with gold. Over that a red surtout, the right arm lined with fur, and appendant with many black ribands, to indicate his inability of drawing it over his right arm, which hung in a crape sling; but which, in the warmth of speaking, he drew out with unlucky activity, and brandished as usual. On his leg were riding stockings. In short, no aspiring cardinal ever coughed for the tiara with more specious ability.’ The truth is, that no one ever knew the value of effect, or practised it more judiciously, than William Pitt, first Earl of Chatham. He was honest in his affectation; and that cannot be said of his great prototype Demosthenes. Having accepted a bribe to avoid speaking on a particular occasion, Demosthenes appeared with several rollers turned round his neck, as for a cold. On seeing this, ‘Demosthenes,’ said a wit, ‘has not only a quinsey, but a golden one.’

Gipsies, also, are very expert in this, as in all other kinds of feignings:

‘Loud when they beg; dumb only when they steal.
They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,
And vex their flesh with artificial sores.’—*Couper*.

This description of cheat is not confined to man. Touch a pertinax beetle, and it will immediately extend its feet, and counterfeit death.

LXX.

WHO APPEAR WELL PREPARED WHEN THEY ARE NOT SO.

SOME can appear to be the most confounded when the best prepared; others, on the contrary, seem to be the best prepared when they have not so much as one cannon in the arsenal. Colonel Goring, whom I have mentioned once or twice before, was an example of the first; we may allude to Lord —— as having been an example of the second. We must not, however, be too cruel to living men.

LXXI.

AFFECTERS OF IGNORANCE.

MR. PITT disdained Lord Thurlow, and Lord Thurlow detested Mr. Pitt. Thurlow,—but Horace Walpole describes his manner much better than I can:—‘Thurlow possessed a weapon which he often brought into action with great skill and effect. He would appear to be wholly ignorant upon the subject of debate, and, with affected respect, but visible derision, to seek information upon it, pointing out with dry, solemn humour, contradictions and absurdities, which he professed his own apparent inability to explain. It was a kind of masked battery, of the most searching ques-

' tions and distressing observations. It often discom-
' posed his adversaries, and seldom failed to force them
' into very embarrassing positions of defence.'

There is a cunning in this line of conduct and man-
ner exceedingly offensive to a respectable mind ; and
it does not appear to have done much service for Thur-
low himself. But there are times and occasions when
they may be not only greatly effective, but honour-
able and just. These times, however, are seldom, and
the occasions ' far and long between.'

LXXII.

TO WHOM PLOTS ARE NECESSARY.

THERE have been some ministers who look upon sus-
picion as good evidence. It was even said of Lord
Burleigh, that it was as necessary that treason should
exist, as that the nation should be preserved.

The reign of Charles II. was a reign of spies and
informers, of plots and conspiracies ; some real and
others fictitious. Thus three separate fictitious plots
were concerted by three of the most detestable of men ;
yet was their evidence received, as if they had been the
wisest and best: viz. Oates, Bedlowe, and Dangerfield.

Oates is said to have been an obscure and illiterate
miscreant, who had been indicted for perjury, and dis-
missed from the chaplaincy of a man-of-war for unna-
tural practices ; Bedlowe had been noted for several
cheats and thefts ; and Dangerfield had been set in the
pillory, scourged, branded, and transported for felony
and coining.

These wretches were permitted to hatch fictitious plots, were credited, and many innocent and some exalted persons were executed in consequence. The king himself is thought to have countenanced the formation of one, if not more, of these plots; and, as a natural consequence, entertained spies and informers, in almost every direction, around his throne.

Of late years, Lord S—— had the faculty, also, of seeing treason in all things, or he was cursed with the weakness of suspecting it; for during the whole period of his being secretary of state, the country was afflicted with being in a continual state of ridicule or of alarm, in respect to real or pretended discoveries of some contemptible conspiracy or another. Some of the wretches he even rewarded with appointments! When the minister resigned, plots and conspiracies were no longer heard of. This censure does not apply to the Marquis of Rockingham. No! his virtues are stated to have been his arts; and, according to one who knew him amply (Mr. Burke), ‘confidence, constancy, fidelity, and ‘correctness,’ were the sole instruments of his policy.

Something analogous to this was known in the reign of Queen Anne; to ridicule which, Swift wrote a treatise to prove (beyond all contradiction) the dangerous tendency, both to government and religion, of Pope’s Rape of the Lock.

Fouché, Duke of Otranto,—Oh, ye gods! for such men to enjoy such titles!—was continually hatching of plots. ‘It was I,’ said he to Bourrienne, ‘who hatched the conspiracy of Georges and Pichegru; and ‘I did it to recover my ministry, and as a consolation

‘ for not having discovered the attempt of Nivose*.’ Napoleon was also as skilful in little plots as in great ones. His little machinations were multitudinous. We might laugh; but the ends for which he made them are not to be laughed at.

LXXIII.

WHO CAN DO NOTHING WITHOUT A PLOT.

NECKER says of the Baron de —, minister at the court of Versailles from Vienna, that in all his negotiations and intercourse he showed the greatest reserve towards those, with whom he was engaged on subjects of business. As every one observed this,—disdaining to be taken for a dupe,—the baron could get no one to divulge any thing. The ambassador, therefore, after a short time, had so little to communicate to the court from which he was sent, that he soon received notice of recall.

Many are the persons who can do nothing whatever without a plot! They can hardly hang their hats upon a peg. They will even organize a plan, for two years, which shall have no other importance of result than that of dining with the squire of a neighbouring parish.

Louis XVI. was allied to this order; and to this foible may be attributed many of those unfortunate circumstances in which he was involved, and which appear, in relation, so various, so opposite, so mysterious and incredible. He had a crowd of confidants, guides, and advisers. Many of these were selected from among

* Bourrienne, iii., 4.

the factions by whom he was opposed. ‘He never made ‘a full disclosure to any one of those persons,’ says Madame Campan; ‘and it is certain that he spoke ‘but to few with sincerity. He kept the reins of all ‘secret intrigues in his own hands; and thence arose ‘the want of co-operation and the weakness which were ‘so conspicuous in all his measures.’

All cunning persons are superficial ones:—there has never been one exception yet.

LXXIV.

WHO NEVER TRUST.

Most men, in a greater or a less degree, practise the histrionic art*: perhaps it may not be too harsh a sentence to assert, that the majority of them live by cunning one half of the year, and by deception the other.

‘Con arte e con inganno
Si vive mezzo l’anno.
E con inganno ed arte,
Si vive l’altra parte.’

Lord Oxford said to a person, who wished to guard him against one in whom he seemed to place great confidence,—‘Be not alarmed, my friend. I never ‘trusted a single man yet; consequently, no one has ‘yet deceived me; and as I never intend to trust any ‘one, no one ever will.’ Seneca says, many have taught others to deceive, because they appear to expect they will deceive them:

‘And ’tis more easy to betray,
Than ruin in another way.’

* *Mundus universus exercet histrioniam.*

The tricks of cunning are infinite ; they are even held in respect ; and hence they are the never-failing resources of superficial politicians.

Bouhours insists, that though every man may be deceived and deceive in his turn, no one deceives the whole world, nor does the whole world deceive any one. What is cunning but knavery ? and what but a knave, however successful, must the epigrammatist have been, who first could insinuate, that the best use of language was to enable us to conceal our thoughts ? Yet, as things are, we ought not to be indignant with Rochefoucault when he asserts, that men would not live long, if they were not the mutual dupes of each other.

One of the most amusing instances of successful cunning was put in practice by an astrologer on Louis XI. That bad man and sovereign having inquired of him when he would himself die, the astrologer, taking advantage of the king's known weakness, answered, ' Three days before your majesty.' The king paused ; and, struck with the prediction, desired that the astrologer should be entertained in his palace, fed well, clothed well, and treated with all manner of friendly attention. Cunning persons, however, generally speaking, have not one tenth the policy of this witty astrologer. They take infinite pains for the greater part of their lives ; but at length become ungraciously conscious that better results might have been brought about at one fiftieth of the cost. All outside—therefore, like brooks, shallow and transparent ; they hide their heads, like crocodiles, and then fancy, after the folly of those animals, that they have concealed all parts of their bodies.

Sir John Sinclair reports of the Prince of Orange* (1786), that being taught early to be suspicious of mankind, he had confidence in no one. He therefore trusted no one; believing that fools and knaves peopled the world. The former, he declared, could not advise, and the latter would not; unless to suit their own ambition and convenience. Than which a more unfortunate prejudice can never disease or encumber the shallow mind of a sovereign. Superior spirits disdain such thoughts!

LXXV.

WHO RESEMBLE THE MINSTRELS OF ILLYRIA.

THESE minstrels sing, and sometimes even sing well: but their invariable custom is to stop in the most interesting part of their ballad, pull off their hats, and beg a collection, before they proceed farther. If no collection is offered, off they go. They will not trust for payment till they have finished their song. So they lose as much by the affront they offer to their audience, as they could have gained by trusting to their sense of honour and gratitude.

Bad servants frequently act by poor masters in a similar manner. They stop till the moment in which their services are most wanted, and then refuse to serve unless their demands are unconditionally complied with. I have seen various instances of this.

* *Corresp.*, i, 39.

LXXVI.

WHO FIGHT THE CAUSE OF THEIR ENEMIES.

MAN, in some respects, resembles the marmot; an animal which, though subject to torpor from the cold, is said* to delight in frost and snow. Men, in fact, argue and act, but too often, for their enemies; and, I think, the Earl of Winchilsea did so last night †, when he declared that he would never enter the walls of parliament again. ‘He would depart with the constitution.’ The offence of parliament was the passing a bill to annul all disqualifications on account of Catholicism; a species of *nova magna charta*.

A multitude of men, I say, with great labour both of body and mind, fight the causes of their adversaries, when they fondly suppose they are fighting their own. ‘The Duke of Newcastle was long used to shuffle and cut the cards at court,’ says Bishop Newton: ‘he, nevertheless, frequently cut the honours into the hands of his adversaries.’ In this, however, he was not singular; for both Whigs and Tories have frequently played, unwittingly, in the same manner: and never did the former do more so than when,—to employ an expressive phrase of a contemporary,—‘they built up a brick wall expressly for that purpose.’

In perilous times, to effect great objects, it is necessary to merge all minor distinctions and considerations, and agree to reciprocal concessions. The British Revolution was the fruit of a coalition; a coalition was formed by Lord Chatham in 1757; and another by Mr. Canning in 1827; but the coalition of Lord North

* Buffon, v., 253.

† April 6, 1829.

and Mr. Fox, and the apostacy of Mr. Pulteney, never could be justified. These, therefore, fought the battles of their enemies.

The coalition of Lord North with Mr. Fox, after the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, Bishop Watson stigmatized as having stamped upon the hearts of millions an impression which can never be effaced; that patriotism is a scandalous game, played by public men for private ends, and frequently little better than a selfish struggle for power*. ‘I am sick of party,’ said the prelate in a letter to the Duke of Rutland †. ‘You are a young man, and zeal may become you; but I have lost my political zeal for ever; the coalition has destroyed it.’

Fox, indeed, but too often fought the cause of his rivals. He lost his reputation, and neutralized his power; and all he was ever after able to effect was merely to speak with great wisdom, and to share, as its reward, the fate of Cassandra in the prophecies he uttered. His conduct, in fact, had the effect of palsying, for many years of extraordinary difficulty and danger, all enthusiasm in regard to public virtue. Nobody believed that such a virtue existed; and we are but now recovering—reluctantly, and with the pace of a snail—from that unfortunate misconception.

LXXVII.

WHO DO NOT KNOW THE RESOURCES OF THEIR ADVERSARIES.

THE second William Pitt knew the resources of his own country too well; but few statesmen ever knew less

* Life, p. 105; 4to.

† Nov. 14, 1783.

the resources of his enemy. He resembled a general who fights many battles, and for many years, without knowing the strength or weakness of his adversary's army. In other respects Pitt resembled the ichneumon ;—an animal ever in search of crocodiles' eggs, which it never eats, and yet is always attempting to break. He treated his adversaries, in fact, as if they resembled the islanders of the South Sea ; who, when first discovered, knew how neither to coagulate milk nor to boil water. To know the strength of our adversary is next to knowing our own.

Sir Philip Francis said of this minister, that he was ' a plant, with the deciduous pomp of a rich foliage, ' decorated with blossoms and flowers, which drop off ' of themselves.' He was so ; yet he was a plant single and eminent. If, as some one said of George, Earl of Harcourt, he had not one fashionable folly, he had not (if we except too great an addiction to wine) one fashionable vice ; and,—like the third Earl of Pembroke,—no one was ever more fitted to purify the atmosphere of a court. But he was unfortunate, as I have before said, in emerging into public life before he had acquired a sufficient knowledge of mankind ; and, in consequence, suffering himself to fall into, or rather to be caught, in the mere drag-net of a party. Hence the lessons he had received from his father, faded from his recollection ; his judgment became lost in the splendour and vortex of an active and exalted station ; and thus perished the best part of the finest political genius this country, perhaps, ever produced.

LXXVIII.

WHO HAVE WRONG OPINIONS OF THEIR OWN SKILL.

MANY very clever men make great mistakes as to what they excel in. How many, for instance, do we all know, who fancy they play admirably on musical instruments ! Musicians laugh at them.

M. Tronchin*, the celebrated physician of Geneva, practising in Paris, of whom Diderot said, that he was among physicians what Socrates was among philosophers, even he made two pretensions, which none of his friends or acquaintances could in any way allow. One of these was depth of sight in politics ; the other playing admirably at whist. His knowledge of politics need only be alluded to, and as to whist, he was perpetually making mistakes, yet never lost the high opinion he entertained of his skill. These characteristics belong to thousands ; and I only record them, as I do many others, that I may not leave my work knowingly incomplete.

LXXIX.

MEN, WHOSE DEATHS HAVE BEEN SUBJECTS OF GREAT JOY TO THEIR ENEMIES.

THE death of Hampden excited a great sensation of joy among the enemies of the commonwealth ; and so great a terror among his friends, that Lord Clarendon

* Vide Grimm's Mem., i., 61.

assures us *, that it appeared as if their whole army had sustained an irretrievable defeat.

We are reminded of Scanderbeg, Mahomet II., and Mithridates. When Mahomet learned the death of Scanderbeg, he was rejoiced beyond measure. 'The Christians have now lost both sword and shield,' exclaimed he; 'what is now to prevent me from completing their destruction?' His joy could only be equalled by that of Pope Sixtus † and the Catholics, when they learned the death of Mahomet himself; or that of the Genoese, on the death of Sampiero; when Fornari, governor of Corsica, not only ordered a general discharge of cannon, with bonfires and ringing of bells; but distributed rewards to all the soldiers who brought any pieces of his body.

We may now allude to Mithridates. Mithridates had a bold and martial figure; a strong, fertile, and creative genius; but he had no heart; at least, he had none, if we may credit the testimony of his enemies: for they accuse him of causing Alcæus of Sardis to be executed, because he had better horses than himself; and of ordering his wives and sisters to be put to death on losing a battle with Lucullus. It is certain, however, that he caused one hundred and fifty thousand Romans to be massacred in one day; and that he killed himself on learning the revolt of his favourite son ‡. When the news of this event reached Rome, the ecstasy was so great, that the Romans seemed as if they had lost,

* Hist. Rebel., ii., 204.

† Guillet's Hist. de Mahomet II., lib. vii. 384.

‡ Pharnaces.

in Mithridates*, not less than a hundred thousand enemies.

I write this at Conway, where Edward received the remains of Llewellyn, covered with wounds. So overjoyed was the king at the death of this hero, that he offered many marks of ignominy upon his person, and caused his body to be carried through the streets of London, on a lance, headed with a silver crown. Then it was placed in the pillory; and afterwards exposed on the highest part of the Tower of London; and all this to a prince for the crime of defending his country to the best of his ability! In contemplating this unworthy deed, we might almost be excused for saying of the Thames—at sunset—

‘The conscious water saw the deed, and blush’d.’

LXXX.

WHO DO ONLY ONE THING AT A TIME.

SOME trials can succeed only once; and they succeed once because they have never been tried before.

To be able to see one thing only at one time is like attempting to be a musician by striking only one string.

Many men can do many things at once; and I have often observed with admiration the facility of hearing and reading at the same time, which, in so peculiar a manner, distinguishes all the Lord Chancellors of Great Britain, when sitting in the Court of Chancery, or listening to appeals in the House of Lords. I have admired this not the less from the knowledge, that complex ideas are all made by the mind out of simple ones.

* Plutarch.

Some persons take two ways to come at the same result. If one will not do, the other may.

‘ Will ye not now the pair of sages praise,
Who the same end pursues by several ways ?’

For circumstances do not often resemble rondos in music ; where the second and third strains reconvert to the one, which ends in the original key.

Some begin with first principles, and proceed by regular demonstrations to establish truth. Others begin at the limit, and proceed gradually to the first principle. These are the synthetic and analytic methods ; and the adoption of one, in preference to the other, sometimes depends on circumstances, and sometimes on original constitution of mind.

How many men resemble Bramante, the architect of Urbino ! He was accused of a multitude of faults ; not arising from want of genius ; but from his not taking sufficient care and time to perfect his ideas. In fact, he did too many things at a time.

Most men of business have particular maxims ; amongst the rest,—‘ Do one thing at a time ’ was the favourite axiom of De Witt : for an illustration of which I refer you to his work, entitled, ‘ The True Interest and Political Maxims of the Republic of Holland ;’ a book eminently worthy of attention*.

* ‘ Napoleon never allowed two things to engross him equally ‘ at one and the same time : when events jostled with his projects, he laid them aside, so to speak, for the future ; in order to consider them at a fitting season ; but chased from his thoughts—such incredible empire could he exercise over himself—every reflection which might distract his mind from the dominating idea of the ‘ moment.’—*Bourrienne*, vol. iii. p. 38.

From statesmen to the stage. Actors can do two things at one time. They can make signs and even speak to persons behind the scenes, and yet carry on the action and the look of the characters they are performing. Mr. Boaden says *, he has seen John Kemble frequently do this ; and I have observed, when I have been behind the scenes at the theatre, that Kean was equally capable of the same mastery.

Those are the most successful, who, having no wide range of ability, direct what little they have to a point, and to that concentrate their exertions. But in respect to mere employment for the mind, diversity has the greater benefit. ' I have lived long enough to ' know, that the great secret of human happiness is ' this,' said Dr. Edward Clarke ; ' never suffer your ' energies to stagnate. The old adage of " too many ' irons" conveys an abominable untruth. You can- ' not have too many ; poker, tongs, and all : keep them ' all going.'

This lesson is applicable to old age, to preserve the body in exercise and the mind in action. But it is not the way for a man to make a fortune. With that object in view, the best method is to concentrate, and have only one matter in hand at a time.

LXXXI.

MEN OF ONE IDEA.

NATURE appears, sometimes, to have only one idea, as it were ; presenting scenes, which are counterparts,

* See Boaden's *Life of Mrs. Siddons*, vol. ii. p. 290.

being composed of the same pictorial elements ; an instance of which is presented in the scenery of Loch Katherine.

Some men, also, appear to have only one idea ; and these serve to remind us of birds having only one note. The prairie warbler, for instance, utters, at short intervals, a feeble ‘ chirr ;’ the yellow-rump warbler has a kind of ‘ chip,’ occasionally repeated ; the hairy woodpecker has also only a single note or ‘ chuck,’ which it often repeats as it digs into the cavities of trees ; the American red-start says, ‘ wièse, wièse, wièse ;’ the golden-crowned thrush has two notes, ‘ peche, peche, peche,’ which it repeats for a quarter of a minute at a time ; and upon the tops of the highest trees of the forests of America, the scarlet tanager repeats, at intervals, his pensive notes of ‘ chip, churr.’ The white-breasted nut-hatch, while winding round the body and larger branches of a tree, cries, ‘ quank, quank ;’ and the small blue grey fly-catcher says, ‘ tsee, tsee,’ not louder than a mouse.

Man magnifies his instruments to produce one effect ; Nature employs but one instrument to produce myriads of effects. ‘ I cannot grasp, much less arrange, at one time, several ideas,’ said Bacon the sculptor. ‘ If I have any thing distinguishing, it is a knack at expressing an idea single and detached.’ ‘ My father,’ said one of his sons to Mr. Cunningham *, ‘ knew where his forte lay. I have heard him often compare himself to the cat in the fable, that had but one sure trick

* *Lives of the most eminent Painters and Sculptors*, vol. iv. 213.

‘ to save herself. He used continually to inculcate the importance of a man’s attending to that one point, in which he discovered his chief talent to lie ; and mentioned himself as an instance attending this principle.’ He is said, however, to have been ‘ quick in thought, decided in resolution, and remarkable for the common-sense views which he took of all matters connected with his art.’

Dr. Baillie, the well-known physician, is said to have been not fertile in expedients ; and if those failed which he made use of, he was frequently at a loss what to do next : he not having had the talent, we are told, of varying his prescriptions every day so as to retain the confidence, and keep alive the expectation, of the patient. That is, he was any thing but a quack. He knew what could be done for his patient, and never aimed at deceiving him.

LXXXII.

LOVERS OF CERTAINTIES.

CERTAINTIES, in respect to income, are great preservatives both of honour and honesty. The assertion, that ‘ small certainties are the bane of men of talents,’ is, nevertheless, true ; for they render men of talents less solicitous of activity.

No one, who boasts of his poverty, or laughs at it, was ever laughed at, or despised for it, in return :—

‘ Nihil habet infelix paupertas durius in se,
Quam quod ridiculos homines facit.’

For my own part, I am rich only in this : that my

wants are few, and my temper cheerful. What was the assertion of Seneca? 'I have been reading Epicurus,' said he, 'and he tells us, that cheerful poverty is an excellent thing. Now I cannot conceive how that state can be called poor which is cheerful.' Neither can I.

I passed the door of Lord *—— the other day: 'Good God!' said my companion, 'what would this man have done had he been fated to be poor! It would be impossible to count the multitude of his meannesses, or, perhaps, the multitude of his crimes.'

A crust and a cot,—

'Where, when endearing converse fails,
Sweet songs or legendary tales,
Or sober history's lesson sage,
Or my own Shakspeare's magic page,
Shall, winged with rapture, speed away
The evening of a winter's day.'—*Neale*.

These,—now that I have seen almost as much as I desire, and felt much more than it is the common lot of man to feel,—these are almost all the luxuries my soul desires.

A state of happiness is that, in which we have frequent opportunities of enjoying the pleasures of the mind, and of experiencing temperate pleasures of the body. An union of these constitutes happiness.

Well; these I have had. The former always; the latter at intervals. For the rest—I trust to time. I should love, therefore,—if I may be pardoned so poetical a wish,—occasionally, to sit among the fragments of a vast castle, in which thunder might roll from tower to

tower ; giving a sign, as it were, of eternal strength ; marking the imbecility and nothingness of earthly things. Time cures many afflictions, which fortune cannot.

LXXXIII.

WHO ACKNOWLEDGE THE SUPERIORITY OF THEIR RIVALS.

A MORE beautiful instance of rivalry than that of Lucius Minutius, towards Fabius Maximus, is not upon record. It adds splendour even to the best part of the Roman character. Consult Livy.

Marlborough and Eugene never contended for pre-eminence. They are described as two bodies, animated by one soul. All their views were in unison, and without rivalry ; they were strengthened by the nobler impulses of emulation. The Earl of Athlone was not so happy. He was indignant that Marlborough should have been elected general in preference to himself. But he afterwards acknowledged his error in terms sufficiently noble. ‘ The success of this campaign,’ said he, ‘ is solely due to our incomparable chief ; since, ‘ I confess, that I, acting as second in command, ‘ opposed, in all circumstances, his opinions and proposals.’

Marlborough was, in fact, so harassed and thwarted, that he was never able to bring his whole powers into action. He was never any thing more than half of himself.

LXXXIV.

RIVALS.

CHILDREN are compelled to run, like Ascanius (*haud passibus æquis*), to keep up with the steps of their fathers. So is it in regard to pupils and tutors; and, not unfrequently, to rivals. Fontenelle says of Corneille, that though he was so accustomed to praise as to be indifferent to flattery, he had yet so little reliance on his own merit, that he too easily admitted the idea of rivals. The sensation arising from rivalry is, doubtless, exceedingly unpleasant; the effects are, however, of permanent utility; more especially to men of high talent and genius.

‘The Romans knew very well,’ says Machiavelli*, ‘how to disarm rivalry on certain occasions.’ They ruined the cities in their neighbourhood, and admitted their inhabitants to dignities and privileges.

The advantages of having a rival, constantly on the watch to surpass us, may be instanced in the relative excellence of Titian and Raphael. Titian laboured to surpass Pordenone; and Raphael to be superior to Michael Angelo. Who is not acquainted with the results? Each party acted by the other like a spur, night and day. And this reminds us of Michael Angelo’s design of several persons shooting at a target, behind which, uninjured, stands a terminus, with a bust of himself.

Shakspeare’s drama of Anthony and Cleopatra,

* Discorsi ii. c. 3.

presents scenes of rivalry, unsurpassed by any other writer: that of Cleopatra in respect to Octavia; and that of Anthony in regard to Augustus. Nothing was ever painted more to the truth and life of passion, than the rivalry of the jealous Egyptian, where she is represented inquiring of the messenger not only in regard to the personal appearance of Octavia, but as to her action and motion. Then as to Anthony;—the difference in him, when alone, and when in the presence of Augustus, is thus graphically sketched by the soothsayer:—

————— ‘Thy lustre thickens,
When he shines by. I say again, thy spirit
Is all afraid to govern thee near him:
But, he away, ’tis noble.

————— Stay not by his side;
Thy demon, that’s thy spirit, which keeps thee, is
Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable,
Where Cæsar’s is not. But, near him, thy angel
Becomes a fear, as being overpower’d; therefore
Make space enough between you.

* * * *

If thou dost play with him at any game,
Thou’rt sure to lose; and of that natural luck,
He beats thee ’gainst the odds.’

To which Anthony:—

————— ‘Be it art or hap,
He hath spoken true. The very dice obey him.’

Anthony and Cleopatra, act ii. sc. 3.

The fact was, Augustus was the more prudent man, and enjoyed the advantage of having a superior genius. Rivalships are advantageous. Those of Zeuxis and

Parrhasius, Angelo and Raphael, benefited them all. It might have been thus with Buffon and Linnæus ; but, according to Vicq d'Azar, they lived enemies, because each considered the other capable of injuring his own glory.

In regard to literary rivalry, Sir Walter Scott wrote thus to Crabbe :—‘ I think rivalry has seldom existed among those, who know, by experience, that there are much better things in the world than literary reputation. . . . I believe many dilettanti authors do cocker themselves into a great jealousy of any thing that interferes with what they are pleased to call their fame ; but I should as soon think of nursing one of my own fingers into a whitlow for my private amusement, as encouraging such a feeling.’

There is a great contrast between the peasantry of Val di Chiana and those of Arezzo. They have hated each other, and been rivals to each other, for many centuries. This has been the case with England and France. Perhaps it may be for the interest of England, that the United States of America may never be formed into one monarchy ; for then there would, assuredly, arise a war for the supremacy of the sea.

LXXXV.

WHO PREVENT RIVALSHIP : WHO REVENGE RIVALSHIP.

MILTON represents Satan as adopting this policy ; the prevention of rivalryship.

————— ‘ Thus saying, rose
The monarch, and prevented all reply ;

Prudent, lest, from his resolution raised,
 Others among the chief might offer now
 (Certain to be refused), what erst they fear'd;
 And, so refused, might in opinion stand
 His rivals; winning cheap the high repute,
 Which he, through hazard huge, must earn.'

Par. Lost, b. ii. l. 466.

The ancient deities are represented as having been exceedingly inveterate against rivals. Minerva changed Arachne into a spider; Juno pursued Io with unremitting cruelty; and Apollo flayed Marsyas with his own hands!

How different were some of the men, who worshipped these assumptuating deities! Æschines lost his cause and was going into exile: how acted his rival (Demosthenes)? He ran after him with a purse. 'How will it be possible for me,' exclaimed Æschines, 'not to regret a country, in which I leave an enemy more generous than I can ever hope to find friends in any other part of the world?' The Greeks, indeed, often acted better than the gods they adored*. *The same may be said of many Christians.*

LXXXVI.

WHO CONCILIATE THEIR RIVALS.

IF some men live by the mistakes of their enemies, others (as Governor Pownal shrewdly remarked of Sir Robert Walpole's successors) live upon the fragments of the systems they have previously laboured to destroy. If it is often bad policy to ruin an enemy, it is frequently as impolitic to assist in cutting off his retreat. This caution was amply observed by the Florentines, when

* 'Fingebat hæc Homerus, et humana ad deos transferebat; mallem divina ad nos.'—*Tusc. Quest. i. 65.*

they refused to join the league formed to cut off the retreat of Charles VIII., on his return from Naples. They not only dreaded an increase of power to Venice, but justly feared that, had they joined the league, the first weight of the French king's resentment would have fallen upon them.

It is sometimes politic to conciliate an enemy, even should that enemy be cruel and atrocious. I have always, therefore, admired the conduct of Idalcan, who regained the city of Goa from the victorious arms of Albuquerque, chiefly by the celerity with which he marched. He came up, in fact, so suddenly, that the Portuguese general was compelled to resort to his ships. Here a curious scene occurred. Learning that Albuquerque was distressed for supplies, Idalcan sent him a message, that his subjects should supply him with all that he wanted, on the principle that he would not conquer him by famine, but by arms. Albuquerque expected supplies every day. He answered, therefore, 'I will receive no presents until we are friends.'

Conciliatory manners and actions are the most politic of policies in ninety instances out of ninety-one. Gustavus of Sweden, and Lorenzo de' Medici, were so fully aware of this, that the former gave good words, gifts, places, and appointments to many of those who had been hostile to his election to the crown; and the latter gave one of his daughters in marriage to Giacompo Salviata, who belonged to the family of those, who had conspired against his house and assassinated his brother. To serve and conciliate enemies is well; nay, wise:—but it must never be done at the expense of our friends.

The policy is wise in other instances ; and hence we must approve the practice of the British government, when, in regulating the custom in respect to the education of the Irish poor, they showed a solicitude that Catholic and Protestant children should be reared together, in order that the main barrier of feeling between the two sects might have no power or opportunity to vegetate. Never was anything more wisely or more beneficently planned !

Rivalship is necessary for the perfection of every art. Annihilate rivalship, and we shall no longer have fine poets, great painters, or eminent statesmen. The passions were given to man, that he might rise superior to all the other creations of nature. The rivalship, however, must rest on a proud integrity of thought, or it may vegetate into vice ; if not into crime.

LXXXVII.

WHO FASTEN MOTIVES ON THEIR RIVALS THEY NEVER
DREAMED OF.

WHEN George I. desired to add Bremen to his continental dominions, the Pretender did not fail to accuse his Majesty of wishing to take possession of that duchy, that he might open a door for an inundation of foreigners into the heart of his kingdom ; wherewith, the more effectually to secure his favourite object, viz. that of rendering Great Britain dependent upon Hanover, where he desired to keep his court.

Tricks of accusation of this kind are so common in private life, that very few persons are, in these days, deceived by them. The accusation was, doubtless, unjust.

LXXXVIII.

RIVALS, WHO HAVE MET THE SAME FATES.

It is a curious instance of justice in the moral world, that when we seek unjustly to injure our rivals, we do it so impolitically, that we unconsciously exalt the persons we attempt to degrade. Rivals are said never rightly to appreciate each other. This is an error; for they appreciate in thought too truly for their peace; and in their speech too little for their interests.

Great men's characters, too, are frequently determined by their rivals; and rivals, also, sometimes share analogous fates. The Dukes of Somerset and Northumberland are remarkable instances. The former was executed in the reign of Edward VI., the latter in that of Mary. They lie, side by side, in the company of two queens.

Anne Boleyn.	Duke of Somerset.	Duke of Northumberland.	Catharine Howard.
∴	∴	∴	∴

The Tower of London is, by far, the most interesting of all the fortresses in Europe; yet what professed scholar ever thinks of reading a history of the Tower? The Tower, in fact, is seldom spoken of, but as a subject of ridicule; such being the effects of familiarity, and neighbourhood. On the banks of the Ganges, however, on the shores of the Mississippi, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, in all places at a distance, it is poetry itself. Not only the Tower, but the river it overlooks.

LXXXIX.

WHO ARE IN A CONSTANT STATE OF HESITATION.

I SEND you a passage from Huet's Memoirs*, relating to Le Fevre, the father of Madame Dacier:—
 'Le Fevre being involved in the errors of Calvinism, I engaged in a correspondence with him, and thought it my duty, if I were able, to recall him to a better way of thinking, and revive in him the dormant sense of piety; and my efforts were not without success; for he seemed lifting his eyes to the light, when a sudden death surprised him, *while he was still hesitating and studying for delay.*'

Let me recommend a perusal of this to you, my dear friend, for you are at an awful crisis, and I dare to tell you so; for though you are not a Calvinist, as Le Fevre was, you are not much removed from his error. Think, and make up your mind, before it is too late; and remember that the celebrated city of our boyhood would never have fallen, had not its inhabitants been at one time too presumptuous, and at another too credulous. Hesitate no longer: choose! A certainty of evil is sometimes not so dangerous as an uncertainty of good.

XC.

TWO SPECIES OF CUNNING.

THERE were two species of cunning, exhibited by Cardinal Mazarin, and John Hampden. 'The car-

* B. iv. p. 47.

'dinal,' said Don Louis de Haro, 'has one great defect as a politician. His intention to deceive is so evident, that he places every one upon his guard with whom he converses or has any thing to do.'

Mazarin was cunning and guilty; Hampden cunning and honest. 'Hampden,' said Sir Philip Warwick, 'was of a concise and significant language, and the politest, and yet subtlest, speaker of any man in the House of Commons; and had a dexterity, when a question was going to be put, which agreed not with his sense, to draw it over to it, by adding some equivocal or sly word, which would enervate the meaning of it as first put.' This account agrees very well with what Clarendon says of the same wary, politic, yet excellent, person.

What the seal is to the Greenlander, the reindeer to the Laplander, the whale to the Aleutian, and the camel to the Arab, cunning is to the base. They cannot live without it. As a reward for the impurity of their food, they are fated, times and often, to fall into the net, in one unguarded moment, they have been years spreading for others. They move with a quick, shuffling motion, and with sure steps, over bad roads, like the elephant of Asia; but at length they begin to stumble, and then they fall—headlong, as it were,—into their own pits.

Others, equally artful, fish a long time with double hooks and gilded flies, till at length their rods, lines, hooks, and baits, are carried away by the force of the stream; and they left on a rock in the midst of a storm, surrounded by waters, and dumb with terror at every flash of the electric fluid.

XCI.

WHO TAKE SHORT CUTS.

THIS may be instanced in Sir Nicholas Bacon.

Henry VIII. had declared Queen Elizabeth illegitimate; and an act passed the two Houses to that effect.

When Elizabeth came to the throne, it was in contemplation to repeal that act.

‘No!’ said Sir Nicholas; ‘the crown takes away all defects. Such is the old law; and we will act upon it. It is wise to close a festered wound.’

According to this maxim, whoever acquires a crown, —no matter by what means,—has a right to it!

XCII.

WHO LOOK TO REMOTE CONSEQUENCES.

No men are prophets; but many are discovered to be right, who were suspected by all to be immeasurably in the wrong; and this leads me to remember a very acute and important remark; viz., that, ‘the direct good or evil proceeding from an action is often of less real importance to general happiness, than such remote consequences as are neither intended by the doer, nor directly observed by the spectator.’

None of us know the full consequences of our thoughts; much less of our actions. We see only a few of them; and even those few we acquire a knowledge of, perhaps, only at a time when age has dead-

ened our faculties and palsied our hopes : a period when

‘The soul’s dark cottage, batter’d and decay’d,
Lets in new lights through chinks that Time has made.’
Waller.

XCIII.

WHO DISLIKE RESPONSIBILITY.

No one likes to resemble Issachar,—an over-laboured drudge, stooping between two burthens. Hence some shun responsibility as they would a pestilence. On learning that he was designed for the appointment of tutor to Louis XIII., Meziriac left Paris in great haste. ‘I felt,’ said he, ‘as if my shoulders were burthened with interests and affairs of a whole kingdom.’ But when a Roman officer fled from Rome, because he feared the responsibility attached to the prætorian prefecture, Alexander Severus observed, that he was the more capable on that account.

This reminds one of Plutarch’s letter to the Emperor Trajan:—‘If your future government prove answerable to your former worth, I shall be happy. But if you become worse for power, yours shall be the danger, and mine the ignominy of your conduct. The errors of the pupil will be charged upon the preceptor. Continue, then, the command of your passions, and make virtue the scope of your actions.’

No one, it appears, ever disliked responsibility more than the late admirable Sir John Moore*.

* ‘An impartial examination of Sir John Moore’s letters

Lord Melcombe assures us*, that the distraction of the public councils was so great in 1754, that no one in office would act beyond his particular department. Not one of the ministers would incur responsibility by taking the lead.

By the present French constitution †, every functionary is exempt from responsibility, who can prove that he has acted under the direction of a superior ‡; and the Charter has left no power of ministerial prosecution to the Chamber of Deputies for any crime short of treason and persecution.

‘furnishes strong evidence of the fact, that, with a thorough knowledge of the theory of his profession, and many points of character necessary to its practice, he was wanting in one quality, for the absence of which all other accomplishments fail to make amends. Moore underrated his own capabilities, and entertained an exaggerated opinion of the talents of his enemies. Responsibility, likewise, was a burthen too heavy to be borne.’—*Gleig*, iii. 355.

* Diary, 317.

† A.D. 1829.

‡ Vide Duvergier de Hauranne, de l'Ordre Legal en France, et des Abus d'Autorité.

XCIV.

MOUNTAINS IN LABOUR.

' Fine as Arachne's web or gossamer,
 Whose curls, when garnish'd by their dressing, show
 Like that spun vapour, when 'tis pearl'd with dew.'

Nabbe's Hannibal and Scipio.

SOME men make great preparations to very small results. We may instance the attempts of Charles VI. That monarch determined on passing over to England, in order to perform some great exploit! Such, at least, is the motive assigned by Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux. For this purpose, he assembled at Sluys the largest fleet of ships that had been witnessed in France for many ages. They were all painted and gilt; and the soldiers and officers covered, as it were, with gold. Every one, in fact, put himself to a great expense. The king appeared determined on this expedition, notwithstanding it was in the midst of winter: but the Duke de Berry declared his resolution, that if the expedition must be hazarded, the king's person should not. Upon this Charles answered, that, as no one should go without him, the attempt should be put off till the ensuing May. Other matters then intervened; and the fleet assembled for nothing. The whole was, in fact, no other than a specimen of boasting, folly, and rhodomontade, that never had any real meaning. A mere mountain in labour!

XCV.

WHO BELIEVE THEY MAY DO ALL THINGS THAT ARE
INNOCENT.

NONE are so deaf, they say, as those who will not hear, and none so blind as those who will not see. These men, however, resemble moles, which, though subterraneous animals, can, in a flood, not only swim well, but climb trees. Granger says* of La Fontaine, that he could discover other men's characters, though they could not see his; and that he often laughed inwardly at the fools who laughed apparently at him.

Thousands, in this world of vanity and display, imagine they have nothing else to do but follow their inclinations. Let their rank, fortune, and opportunities be what they may, they have only enjoyments to conciliate; no duties to fulfil; reminding us, in fact, of the butterfly in Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*:—

'What youthful bride can equal her array?
Who can with her for easy pleasure vie?
From mead to mead with gentle wing to stray,
From flower to flower on balmy gales to fly,
Is all she has to do beneath the radiant sky.'

Some are as inconvenient in their innocence, as others are in their guilt. They imagine, for instance, that they have a right to do whatever they please, provided they are actuated by good motives; and some imagine they may do whatever they desire, provided the deeds are innocent. Young ladies, for example, sometimes believe they may take solitary walks by

* Vol. iv. 481.

moonlight, to listen to the nightingale! What more innocent?

Men of genius are too often visited by this species of presumption; their genius sanctifying, in their estimation, every innocent deviation from custom they feel inclined to commit. Their deviations, however, are, but too frequently, occasioned more by misfortune than by a wish to be singular.

‘Ah! should there be to whom the fatal blight
Of falling genius gives a base delight;
Men, who exult when minds of heavenly tone
Jar in the music which was born their own;
Still let them pause. Ah! little do they know
That what to them seem’d *vice* might have been *woe*.’

Byron.

In fact, innocence—and no experienced person can deny this—sometimes produces, in a worldly sense, even worse consequences than guilt.

XCVI.

WHO GIVE MEN EMPLOYMENTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF GETTING RID OF THEM.

FOR this end Louis XI. sent Peter de Brezé with two thousand men-at-arms to assist Margaret of Anjou.

In later times Lord *—— was banished to the court of St. Petersburg, under the title of ambassador; and still more recently, Lord *—— was sent to the court of Stockholm. Had Charles I. and Cosmo I. understood this method, Strafford had been saved from the block; and Cosmo’s private secretary had escaped the persecution of the Holy Inquisition.

XCVII.

INSTANCES IN WHICH SIMILAR WEAKNESSES PRODUCE
DIFFERENT RESULTS.

CHARLES of England and Louis XIV. : some author, (I forget whom) thus remarks upon them. Charles I. lost his head upon a scaffold for having, in the beginning of the troubles, sacrificed the blood of his friend Strafford. Louis XIV., on the contrary, became the peaceable master of his kingdom, by suffering the exile of Cardinal Mazarine.

XCVIII.

WHO WORK SLOWLY TILL EXCELLENCE GROWS INTO A
HABIT.

THE only pictures I remember to have seen by Lodovico Caracci, are the Death of Darius, the Madonna and Child, with St. Jerome, Mary Magdalen, and the Angels, copied from Correggio,—one of the most exquisite of his performances; Susannah and the Elders, in which the subject is treated more chastely than it usually is; St. Francis with the Angels, in which the saint, in an ecstasy of devotion, is soothed by the music of cherubs; a Dead Christ, with the Marys and St. John, in which the Magdalen is drawn with all the force and mellow richness of Correggio; and the Vision of St. Catharine, in which twilight is exquisitely delineated.

This painter, in early years, was of so slow and inactive an intellect, that his masters, Fontana and Tintoretto, advised him to betake himself to another pro-

fession. He knew himself better. ‘His dilatory character,’ says Lanzi*, ‘did not spring from a confined genius, but from deep penetration. He pursued Nature everywhere; he exacted of himself a reason for every line he drew; and considered it the duty of a young artist to aim only at doing well, *until it grows into a habit.*’

This maxim is important, not only to painters, but to every man that lives.

XCIX.

WHOSE FIRST THOUGHTS ARE BEST.

IN Gerard Hamilton was read a double volume: and one of his biographers shall unfold it.

‘On the first view of any complicated question, his opinion was almost always right; but, on reflection, his ingenuity sometimes led him astray: hence, deceived by his own refinement, and viewing the point under consideration in a great variety of lights, he doubted, hesitated, and perhaps decided erroneously at last †.’

What did his friends do, in consequence, when they wished to gain his best thoughts? They endeavoured to obtain his *first* thoughts; and rarely consulted him twice on the same subject.

* Vol. v. 97.

† Vid. Pref. to Parl. Logic, xxxix.

C.

SUAVITER IN MODO; FORTITER IN RE.

St. Ambrose, one of the Fathers, possessed rare qualities for a priest. He was a man of the world, as it were: inflexible, yet moderate; bold in his episcopal authority, but always with an air of sweetness and sincerity. This says Du Pin*.

Most men of the world are, in some degree, though not, perhaps, elegantly so, gifted with the 'suaviter in modo.' They have, also, in subjects connected with their interests and passions, the 'fortiter in re:' but neither, when applied to their principles; and too often only so, in respect to the others, than may seem to suit with the times. Courteous abroad; at home so petulant as scarcely to allow a fine day to arise from the presence of the sun, or a brilliant night from that of the moon and stars. The 'suaviter in modo,' and 'fortiter in re,' when used as natural instruments to effect good purposes, are admirable qualities indeed: when not so, dangerous and formidable to the last degree.

Most men resemble the natives of the Caroline Islands;—more expert in building boats, as it were, than ships.

Few know how to render themselves counterparts of Edward, first Earl of Manchester; and happy is it; for he was equally acceptable to men of depraved inclinations † as to those of steady and uncorrupted principles. And here we may be cherished for quoting a

* Vol. i. 294. f.

† Clarendon.

passage from one of the finest poetical moralists of our country. For all men may rest decidedly assured—

————— ‘That what is base
 No polish can make sterling; and that vice,
 Though well-perfumed and elegantly dress’d,
 Like an unburied carcase, trick’d with flowers,
 Is but a garnish’d nuisance; fitter far
 For clearly riddance, than for fair attire.’

Cowper; Winter Walk at Noon.

I am now reminded of Cardinal Polignac. His manners were so exceedingly urbane, and his disposition so gentle and generous, that when he quitted his abbey to assume the cardinal’s hat, the monks of his abbey—wept. He may be known by three circumstances. ‘You appear, Sir,’ says Pope Alexander VIII., ‘always to be of my opinion; and yet your own prevails at last.’ ‘I have been conversing with a man,’ said Louis XIV., ‘and a young man, who has contradicted me in every thing; yet pleased me in every thing.’ That he had the ‘fortiter,’ also, is attested by his answer to the Dutch ministers, who, after the victory over the French attained by the allies, assumed a high tone: ‘Gentle-men, you speak like persons *not accustomed to victory!*’

CI.

WHO IMPROVE ALL THINGS.

THESE men are scarce.

Because they adapt their subjects to the standard of our tastes, good painters are said to raise their subjects, and improve them even above the standard of nature.

Whether they do so in reality is not quite so certain. They possess a rich and glowing fancy, it is true, at all times obedient to their own wills and imaginations ; but if we saw Nature from a true focus, perhaps we should discover, that Nature is only to be really improved by the immediate hand of Nature herself ; unless, indeed, we consider, that when man operates, he merely operates as an agent ; being the agent that Nature selects to alter and improve her own conceptions : and this, indeed, is no other than the fact.

CII.

DIAGRAMS.

WE may compare the relative successes of some to diagrams in geometry. One advances in a right line ; a second in a curved line ; a third in a mixed line ; a fourth obliquely ; a fifth in a circle ; a sixth in a segment ; a seventh spirally ; an eighth obtusely ; and a ninth curvilinearly. Some rise in the manner of a pyramid, and others after the smooth and regular gradation of an inclined plane. These, for the most part are the happiest.

CIII.

WHO RISE UPON OTHER MEN'S FOLLY.

ANNIBAL CARACCI, by correcting the outlines of his masters, produced engravings more perfect than the original drawings. Many men, in the same way, make fortunes out of the weaknesses or negligences of their superiors. And this reminds us of Lord Bacon, and

Edward, the sixth Duke of Somerset. The former is said * to have been the dupe of his servants, who sat at the lower end of the table ; while he sat, abstracted, at the upper. As to the latter †, he was at the disposal of all those, who could manage to insinuate themselves into his esteem and confidence. It mattered little who these were, or whither their interests tended.

‘ The sturdy oak, for all its strength,
By raging winds is rent in twain ;
And marble stone is pierced at length,
With little drips of drizzling rain.’

CIV.

LORD CLONMELL.

SIR Jonah Barrington gives a curious picture in respect to Lord Clonmell, many years Chief Justice of the Irish Court of King’s Bench ; and in this picture we may contemplate a class. ‘ His boldness was his first introduction ; his policy his ultimate preferment. ‘ Courageous, vulgar, humourous, artificial, he knew the world well, and profited by that knowledge. He cultivated the powerful ; he bullied the timid ; he fought the brave ; he flattered the vain ; he duped the credulous ; and he amused the convivial. Half-liked, half-reprobated, he was too high to be despised, and too low to be respected. His language was coarse, and his principles arbitrary ; but his passions were his slaves, and his cunning was his instrument †.’

* Granger, vol. i. p. 265.

† Burnet.

‡ Historical Memoirs of Ireland, p. 38.

This is, indeed, a frightful picture of a judge! If a true one, his Lordship must, in some respects, have remembered a character, described by Cicero*. It must, however, be confessed, that the authority is far from being of the first order.

CV.

MEN WHO MAY BE COMPARED TO CERTAIN FISHES.

————— ‘ Suffolk,
 And York, and impious Beaufort, that false priest,
 Have all limed bushes to betray thy wings,
 And fly thou, how thou can'st, they'll tangle thee.’

Shakspeare; Second Part of Henry VI.

SUCH was the council the Duchess of Gloucester gave to her husband.

Some men's practices may be compared to those of the sturgeon. This fish, which abounds in the Danube, the Wolga, and the Caspian, has its mouth placed under its head. It has no teeth; but before its mouth it has four tendrils hanging from its nose, like worms. These tendrils the smaller fish mistake for worms; catch at them; and, hanging by them, are drawn thence into the sturgeon's mouth.

Fishes live in a continual state of warfare; the weak being perpetual martyrs to the strong. Their voracity is, almost, insatiable; and there is scarcely a shell, however hard, their stomachs cannot digest. Many species are exceedingly long-lived; and prolific almost beyond the stretch of credulity. With these we may

* ‘Cum tristibus severe, cum remissis jucunde, cum senibus graviter, cum juventute comiter vivere.’—Cic.

associate those men of the world who seize upon all they can get ; who war with every one, who consents not to advance their interests ; who fawn upon their friends in the days of prosperity ; and who, in their adversity, soothe all manner of respect, by occupying themselves in devising how they may best, and most amply, profit by their fall.

CVI.

LOVERS AND HATERS OF HISTORY.

IF History enlighten the mind in some essential particulars, it greatly contaminates it in others : for it is, for the most part, the mere record of crime ; therefore it is the history of man only as it regards his worst qualities ; the excellence of his nature being almost entirely disregarded.

History, because it acquaints us with the transactions of nations, and the presumed characters of certain elevated persons, has been styled the ‘ foundation of all useful knowledge.’

This is a great mistake. History is not ‘ the foundation of all useful knowledge ;’ but the bane of it ! It might, indeed, have become so, had it been benevolently written ; but as it has been composed on the worst of all possible principles,—the elevation of crime,—it is, in fact, the greatest of corrupters of that being, who has been emphatically called the abstract

‘ Of all perfection, which the workmanship
Of heaven has modelled.’—*Ford’s Lovers’ Melancholy.*

Salmasius, however, is unusually eloquent on the other side :—‘ *Ex omni studiorum amœnitate,*’ says he, ‘ lit-

‘teraram, utilitate, vir illustrissime, historiam unam, omnium maxime cum utilem vitæ, tum jucundam esse, nemo tam procul a litteris est, atque ab omni humanitate aversus, qui vel ignoret, vel dicet ignarus saltem non fateatur.’

The biographers of Guiccardini* relate an anecdote, which has been so often repeated, that I am reluctant to record it here; but the nature of my page demands it. The emperor being informed, that many nobles were in attendance, consulted his leisure as to their admission; but hearing that Guiccardini was in waiting, too, he instantly admitted him. At this the courtiers were exceedingly indignant; especially some military officers, who had been waiting for an audience several days. Hearing this, the emperor took Guiccardini by the hand, and entering the drawing-room, addressed his courtiers after the following manner:—‘Gentlemen! I am told that you think it strange, that I should give admission to Guiccardini before you; but I desire you to consider, that I can create, in one hour, a hundred nobles, and a like number of officers in the army; but I cannot produce such an historian as Guiccardini in twenty years †. To what purpose are the pains you

* We sometimes get erroneous spelling of words and names into our heads; and it appears almost impossible to get them out again. Guiccardini, for instance, should be *Guicciardini*; and who does not write Galileo instead of *Galilei*? Lord Mansfield always wrote and spoke the word *authority* thus, ‘*autority*’; and the late Sir James Mackintosh wrote *Biron* instead of *Byron*. At least I have two letters in which he so spelt it.

† Something similar was said by our Henry VIII., in regard to Holbein.

‘ take to execute your respective functions either in the
 ‘ camp or in the council, if historians do not transmit
 ‘ an account of your conduct to posterity? Who are
 ‘ they, that have informed mankind of the heroic actions
 ‘ of your ancestors, but historians? It is necessary then
 ‘ to honour them, that they may be encouraged to convey
 ‘ the knowledge of your illustrious deeds to futurity.
 ‘ Thus, gentlemen, you ought neither to be offended,
 ‘ nor surprised, at my regard for Guicciardini; since you
 ‘ have as much interest in his province as myself.’

Louis XIV. seems to have been sensible of this; for in his expedition to Flanders * he took with him Pelisson, the historian, and the artist, Vandermeulen; the one to record his victories, the other to paint them. Napoleon desired to do the same by St. Pierre; but the philosopher nobly declined the invitation †.

Neither the battles of Marathon, Salamis, or Plataea; nor, indeed, any one circumstance recorded by Herodotus, relative to the invasion of Greece; nor the name of the younger Cyrus, nor the expedition under Xenophon, are to be found in Ferdousi, nor in any annals of Persia. Had not Homer ‡ written of Ilion, the name of it had perished.

Of the battle of Chæronea, which changed the whole aspect of affairs in Greece, not only for a period, but for

* Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV.*

† ‘ Und’ a quelli, à cui s’ alza il nostre polo,
 Et à ahi ferma in contra i suoi vestigi
 Per lui del corso tuo le fama aggiunque.’—*Tasso.*

‡ ‘ Nisi Ilias illa extulisset, idem tumulus qui corpus ejus con-
 ‘ taxerat, nomen ejus obruisset.’—*Cicero.*

the whole of time, there are few or no details. The conduct of the day is only known by the result of the battle. The Athenians, who could have described, *would not*; and the Macedonians, who wished to do it, *could not*. Hence scarcely the name of one person is preserved who perished in it.

‘Tis not a pyramid of marble stone,
 Though high as our ambition !
 ’Tis not a tomb, cut out in brass, which can
 Give life to the ashes of a man ;
 But verses only. They shall fresh appear,
 Whilst there are men to read or hear ;
 When time shall make the lasting brass decay,
 And eat the pyramid away.’—*Cowley*.

This passage naturally reminds us of another :—

‘ Vain was the chief’s, the sage’s pride ;
 They had no poet, and they—died !
 In vain they schemed ; in vain they bled ;
 They had no poet, and are dead !’—*Pope*.

Machiavel draws all, or most, of his examples from Greece, Rome, and Italy : sometimes from France and Switzerland ; but seldom, if ever, from England :—the history of our country having been as little known to the learned in Europe in the time of Machiavel, as that of Russia in the time of Charles I. and Oliver the Protector. Wherefore ? Because England had not yet been blessed (or cursed) with an historian, that any foreigner could read.

‘ The lives of heroes,’ says La Bruyère, ‘ have enriched history ; and history has adorned the actions of heroes ; so that it is difficult to tell who are most indebted, the historians to those, who furnish them

‘ with such noble materials, or the great men to their ‘ immortalizing historians.’ Not in the least difficult! for though Sallust* would give the palm to heroes, heroes are much more indebted to history, than history is to heroes: for heroes are the very banes of history! Had history given us the reign of human virtue, instead of human crime, then, indeed, ‘ twould have been some- ‘ thing.’ As it has been, and in most respects still is, we may, too fatally, agree with Orosius, that history is an astounding record—‘ De miseria humana.’

II.

Bayle seems to have thought,—at least at one time of his life †,—that history should be written by persons appointed by the state for that especial purpose. Count de Hertzberg ‡, too, proposed, that, in every nation, there should be a competent person appointed, whose office should be to keep a journal of all transactions; to collect all state papers; and to require from persons in power such elucidations as might be essential and necessary: and this to extend not only to the transactions of one state, but to those of others in any way regarding it.

These would, undoubtedly, furnish valuable materials for history; but they could not, in any way, be regarded as histories in themselves. They would be mere annals §.

* ‘ Ac mihi quidem, tametsi haudquaquam par gloria sequatur ‘ scriptorem, et auctorem rerum.’

† Gen. Dict. x. 336.

‡ Mem. Roy. Acad. Berlin. 1786.

§ The office of Chancellor to the republic of Florence was held,

The first specimens we have of any application of history to politics are in the respective works of Machiavel *, Buchanan †, Milton ‡, and Mariana §.

Historians receive impressions from times, opinions, and persons. The times, in which they live, lead them, but too often, to form false estimates; former authorities warp their opinions; and favourite prepossessions modify, and, perhaps, pervert their judgments. In fact, to acquire a thorough knowledge of things, and to report them free from bias, whether of prejudice or of affection, are two of the most difficult of all difficult attempts. Hence Tacitus rightly asserts, that between hatred and obligation, all regard to the instruction of posterity is lost.

A writer makes an assertion. That writer being eminent, what he asserts passes for truth: that truth is propagated for centuries. No one presumes to doubt, much less to invalidate: historians, for the most part, being the most patient of men; transcribing and transmitting; without labour of examination, materials already formed to their hands#. If such an accusation

for a series of years, by scholars of the first eminence. Salutati, for instance, Leonardo Aretino, Carlo Marsuppini, Poggio Bracciolini, Benedetto Accolti, Bartolomeo Scala, Alessandro Bracchio, and Machiavelli, were all, successively, Chancellors of that celebrated state; and most, if not all of them, wrote memoirs of the republic.

* Discorsi.

† De Jure Regni apud Scotos.

‡ Defensio Secunda.

§ De Rege et Regis Institutione, et de mutatione monetæ.

|| 'Tædio investigandæ penitus veritatis cuilibet opinioni temere succumbunt.'—*Minut. Felix*.

were just in the age of Thucydides—who makes the complaint *—what shall we say of the present?

After a certain period, then, subjects are almost as little worth the trouble of investigating, as the attempt to settle the question (so ably treated of by Cluver and Bochart on one side, by Sallust, Varro, Livy, and Spelman, on the other), whether Virgil's account of Æneas' landing in Italy be a fable or not.

Some historians, however, may be associated with Aristarchus of Greece, Guyet, of France, and Bentley of England; all of whom expunged and altered a vast number of lines in the poets they respectively edited, because the rhythm was not conformable to the melody they had established as standards in their own minds. Critics alter words, lines, and sentences; historians, sentiments, descriptions, and facts. Many portraits are, in consequence, drawn, from which we can learn even less truth than can be derived from the language of gazettes, grants, or patents; and equally as little, as from those learned and elaborate compositions that give life, spirit, and grace, to the walls and pillars of churches and chapels, abbeys and cathedrals. So little veracity, indeed, is there in most of them, that truth, biographers, historians, and epitaph writers, appear almost to have taken oaths never to agree.

Shall we revert to the history of science and art? The discovery of gunpowder is disputed; especially in its application to military tactics. Yet the history of Spain sufficiently attests, that it was used in warfare, even so early as the thirteenth century, by the Moors.

* *Ουτως ἀταλαίπωρος τοῖς πολλοῖς ἡ ζήτησις τῆς ἀληθείας, καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ ἴτομα μᾶλλον ἐρίσσονται.* Lib. i.

In respect to printing, surely this art must have immortalized its inventor, faithfully and indelibly. Yet what assertions and contradictions! Years, and the labours of many eminent investigators, were unable to fix the subject on correct foundations. At length a pensionary of Rotterdam (Meerman) entered the field, and every difficulty seems to have vanished*.

The acquirement of historical knowledge may, in some respects, be compared to the being placed, suddenly by moon-light, in the midst of a cathedral. At first the eye beholds nothing; at length the windows are seen; then the pillars and arches; then the galleries, the sounding-board, the organ; and, lastly, the chancel, the communion-table, and the monuments. But all indistinctly, and liable to be treasured in the imagination, more like pictures than scenes of reality. 'He alone reads history aright,' says an author, whose name I have neglected to note, 'who, observing how powerfully circumstances influence the feelings and opinions of men, how often vices pass into virtues, and paradoxes into axioms, learns to distinguish what is accidental and transitory in human nature from what is essential and immutable.' There is in this, nevertheless, a very great difficulty: for to learn what the historian is pleased to write, and to learn the absolute truth, are, but too often, I fear, very different things.

The best poems, whether epic or dramatic, are

* Coster of Haerlem invented moveable types in wood; Gensfleisch or Guttemberg, of Mentz, carved types in metal; and Schoeffer, of Strasburg, cast types in an iron matrix, engraved with a puncheon.—*Origines Typographicae*.

founded on real occurrences. The inspiration of truth has this result. The most attractive histories, however, are those, which are most associated with the imagination. The poems of Homer, and the dramas of Sophocles, confirm the truth of the first position; the lively and picturesque histories of Herodotus and Livy amply illustrate the correctness of the second.

If poetry is the apologist, history is the accuser of mankind. It widens experience, it is true; but in return it opens a vista to melancholy prospects. For it accustoms the mind to atrocity, and closes many of the best avenues to the heart. I cannot but think, then, that the world would reap a harvest of benefit, could the history of its past transactions be entirely lost to posterity*.

III.

As history presents, in almost every page, so many instances of levity and folly, injustice, and oppression, rapacity and outrage, that it seems wonderful that society could have continued to exist under so vast an accumulation, it is astonishing to observe how solicitous historians have been to gloss over the atrocities of conquerors; and, in many instances, entirely to conceal them. The greatness of a crime, in their estimation, seems to lessen its guilt. Curious too, is it, to remark the pious horror with which they regard the excesses and barbarities, committed by the people and the populace; and with what pride and exultation they relate the same series of excesses and barbarities, when perpe-

* Voltaire gives us one consolation:—'La multiplicité des faits,' &c. 'The multiplicity of facts is become so great, that everything must soon be reduced to extracts and dictionaries.'

trated by the rich and great. The atrocities of the slaves, during their wars with their tyrants, for instance, both in Greece and in Rome, are related with all the presumed virtue of indignation; and in all the records of Germany, no period is more the subject of a similar feeling than that in which occurred what is emphatically styled ‘the war of the peasants*.’

And here we must, on no account, neglect to remark, how lamentable is the circumstance, that the reigns of good sovereigns should so often be permitted to sink into obscurity. How few readers, for instance, are permitted to know anything in regard to the virtues of Claudius II., and of Tiberius II. In Montesquieu’s ‘*Considerations sur les Causes de la Grandeur et Decadence des Romains,*’ only one line and a half is allotted to Titus; and in ‘*Gibbon’s History of the Decline and Fall,*’ only two or three slight paragraphs!

A few words now in regard to historic truth.

That Miltiades died in prison is asserted by Nepos †, Plutarch ‡, Justin §, Valerius Maximus ||, and Seneca ¶; but, from a passage in Herodotus **, it is evident that it was not so.

Plutarch abounds in ‘*touches of exquisite pathos;*’ but who shall reconcile many of his accounts with those of other historians? His portraitures have been compared to colossal images; those of Nepos to medallions. The latter, indeed, are elegantly embossed: but the author confounds Darius with Xerxes, and Mil-

* Vid. Petri Gnodalii Historia de Seditioe repentina vulgi, præcipue Rusticorum.

† In Vit. Conon.

‡ In Vit. Cimon.

§ Lib. ii.

|| Lib. v.

¶ Controv. 29.

** Lib. vi. c. 136.

tides, the son of Conon, with Miltiades, the son of Cypæus : and let any one read his lives of Conon and Agesilaus, and afterwards look into Xenophon and Justin, and decide whether to write history or biography in that manner is not equally as useless as writing a romance.

Rome rises in Livy from a band of criminals, slaves, and debtors ; but in the amplifying page of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, she sprang from a colony, with Romulus at the head, peacefully issuing from the gates of Alba. Indeed, so much contrariety is there in the earlier ages of this city, that Niebuhr treats the existence of Romulus and Numa as unreal as that of Hercules, Theseus, and Menu ; and there is, to say the least of it, some ingenuity in a supposition which, I believe, was first suggested by Levesque de Pouilly*.

In later times, it seems almost impossible, that such beings as some of the first Cæsars are described by Tacitus and Suetonius should ever have existed † ! There is sometimes much flattery of the living in a satire on the dead ; and it is well known that many of the emperors had no distaste to having the crimes and vices of their predecessors recorded : since it served to cover or disguise their own. Yet who can refuse to credit these awful pictures, when we find many of the emperors, after the Antonines, quite as detestable as those previous to Trajan. The character of Tiberius, as given by Tacitus, however, appears to me to be an impossible one.

* Histoire de la Republique Romaine ; or, Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions. 1722.

† ' I know not,' said the Abbé St. Pierre, ' whether kings, like Caligula and Domitian, are gods ; but certain it is they are not men.'

Shall we turn to Paterculus? His characters of Cicero *, of Antistius †, and of Piso ‡, are admirably drawn; but that of Scipio § is romantic; and those of Tiberius and Sejanus beneath the dignity of contempt.

The account of Regulus's torture by the Carthaginians is said by some to have been made up between the time of Polybius and Cicero. Cicero || says they cut off his eyelids, threw him into a dungeon, and kept him awake in a machine till he died. Florus ¶ says he was tortured and crucified; Appian ** records that he was put into a barrel full of sharp nails; (in which state he is drawn by Salvator Rosa.) Diodorus Siculus ascribes his death to neglect and carelessness ††; but Polybius is entirely silent in respect to the whole. Who could know so well as Polybius? and had he suppressed such a remarkable atrocity, would the Romans have valued his history ††?

Some writers, like Lactantius, may be credited in respect to public occurrences; but not in regard to private ones. Some invent the principal part of their materials; and others, like Varillas §§, quote authors, who never had existence but in their own imaginations. As to Eusebius,—he confesses that, in treating of one

* Lib. ii. 134.

† Lib. ii. 153.

‡ Lib. ii. 265.

§ Qui nihil in vitâ nisi laudandum aut fecit, aut dixit, aut sensit.

|| De Officiis, Lib. iii.

¶ Lib. viii.

** De Bell. Punica.

†† Lib. xxiv.

‡‡ Can this portion of Polybius be lost? a knowledge of this would settle the question at once.

§§ Anecdotes de Florence; ou, l'Histoire Secrète de la Maison de Medicis. 1685.

persecution, he suppressed all that could throw ignominy on the professors of religion, and related all that might redound to their glory.

Shall we not prefer Arrian's History to that of Quintus Curtius? His accounts are more probable; his authorities are quoted*; his geography is more accurate.

Whose accounts shall we select in respect to the Jews?—Those of Tacitus, of Justin, or of Josephus? They agree in nothing.

Some princes have enjoined their reigns not to be recorded at all. 'It is ridiculous,' said Niger, 'to write the histories of those of whom we stand either in hope or in fear †.' Some Arabic sultans have even gone so far as to punish historians with death!

Shall we allude to the diversity, which history presents, in respect to individual character? The Cæsar Borgia, whom Machiavel represents as courageous, eloquent, and munificent, and whose crimes and errors he ascribes to *estrema malignita di fortuna* ‡, is the same person whom Guicciardini stigmatises as being a monster of lust, rapine, injustice, and cruelty §. In respect to the Medici family, who shall decide between the opposed histories of Nerli || and Nardi ¶?

* Ptolemy and Aristobulus.

† Spartian in Nigro, c. ii. 12.

‡ Del Princ., viii. 15.

§ His true character is emphatically set forth by Paulo Giovio:

—————'Rabidus, barbarus, impotens,

Humani generis pernicius, atque hominum lues.'

Carm. Mus. ; Poet. Ital., v., 433.

|| Commentari.

¶ Le Historie della Città di Fiorenza.

Italian biography is equally contradictory. Correggio, according to some*, was of an obscure family, and died in poverty and want; in the page of others †, his predecessors were illustrious, and he left an inheritance to his children sufficiently ample.

The causes of actions, too, are equally misrepresented, or rendered doubtful by the difference of relation. Thus, though Guicciardini and Rucellai insist, that Pope Alexander VI. excited Charles VIII. of France to the invasion of Naples, it is far from certain; since Comines ‡, who was more likely to be accurately informed, attributes it entirely to the entreaties of Sforza, Duke of Milan. In respect to the fact, whether this pope died of a fever, or of the poison he and his son had prepared for others, who shall determine between those who assert the latter, and Burchardo and Muratori, who insist upon the former?

In respect to battles; in that fought near Bologna, in which Federigo, Count of Urbino, was general of the Florentines, and Alessandro Sforza, of the Venetians;—one account states, that three hundred men were

* Vide Vita d' Antonio de Correggio.

† Fa. Orlando; *Abecedario Pittorico*.

‡ This pope is allowed to have possessed virtues as well as inordinate vices; and he is, therefore, one of the few to whom justice has been done, and not by Guicciardini only:

'Fù magnanimo, et generoso, et prudente,' &c.

Monaldeschi; Comm. Istor., 148. Ven. 1634.

'In Alexandro, ut de Annibale Livius Scribit, æquabant vitia virtutes,' &c.

Raph. Volater; Anthropologia, xxii. 683. Basil, 1559.

killed ; a second increases the number to eight hundred ; and a third to a thousand ; while Machiavel insists that both parties kept the field at the close of the day ; and that not a single soldier lost his life !

Nor are German histories much more to be depended upon. In the dispute, for instance, between Huss and the clergy of Prague, in consequence of which a considerable number of Germans retired to Leipsic, one author states the multitude to have consisted of two thousand *, a second insists upon five thousand †, a third swells it to twenty-four thousand ‡, a fourth to thirty-six thousand §, and a fifth to forty-four thousand ||.

These discrepancies remind us of Suwarrow. Having desired his secretary to draw up an account of the battle at Persan, the secretary wrote,—‘ The Russians lost two thousand, the Turks three hundred.’ ‘ Very well,’ said the General ; ‘ a plain story enough, and not far from the truth. But you do not seem to have reflected on the nature of your subject. The Russians, remember, are friends. We must spare them. Write down two hundred and fifty killed. But the Turks,—they, you know, are infidels ; and we must, as soon as we can, utterly exterminate them. Write twenty-two thousand ¶.’ And with this despatch in the *Moscow and St. Petersburg Gazettes*, the good people of Russia, as well as those of all Europe, were, for many years, deluded ; and, as far as I know, are so still.

* Trithemius. † Æneas Sylvius. ‡ Dubravius.

§ Lauda. || Lupatius.

¶ See James’s *Tour through Germany*, vol. i. 440.

Of the battle fought between Charles Martel and Abderama, near Tours, in which the Saracens were routed with great slaughter, the annalists of those times give little or no account; but, 'We have historians,' says Cordenoi, alluding to Faucet and Paulus Emilius, 'who write of it as if they had been present in all the councils, and seen every motion of both armies. They give us long speeches, describe the arms and the manœuvres, and even the postures and manner in which the dead laid upon the field of battle!'

Some historians may be estimated by the example of Father Orleans, who, writing an account of the revolutions in England, refused to give any information relative to the obtainment of Magna Charta; because he considered that charter a rock on which the royal authority was wrecked, and, therefore, as the source of all the commotions which subsequently distracted the country. As to Davila, he has suppressed not only the consequences of certain crimes, perpetrated by Catherine de' Medicis, but even the crimes themselves*.

Shall we turn to Spain? Mariana, 'the father of Spanish history†,' would be more worthy of attention, were he not so ambitious of ascribing to Spain whatever is most remarkable in human action. He has, however, one incomparable merit; viz., that of writing in an age of Jesuits, and in a country of despotism, in

* Pasquier was the first in France to observe the true design of history. He it was, who first neglected skirmishes and even battles, to give pictures of the laws, manners, customs, rights, and prerogatives, poetry, language, and antiquities.

† Vide Bouterwek, *Histoire de la Littérature Espagnole.*

a spirit less partaking of a divinity professor, than of an ancient Roman. Guido Bentivoglio, in his History of the Wars in Flanders, exhibits, too evidently, an inclination to favour the character of Spain, and a decided preference for the court of Rome.

De Barros' History of the Portuguese conquests in Asia I have never read; but Sismondi says of the historian, that if an individual commit a perfidious action, he condemns him at once; but when the crime is of a public nature, and is approved by the nation at large, the author is then enthusiastic and unmeasured in his demonstration of applause.

Philip Experiens is accused of an extraordinary instance of baseness; viz., that of advising Albert, the son of Casimir, to expose the greatest of his nobility to slaughter in Moldavia, in order that no one might be left strong enough to defend the liberty and laws. Paul Jovius, who accuses him of this, gives him, nevertheless, the credit of having written the History of Ladislaus, in a manner superior to all other historians since the days of Tacitus. If Jovius is as just in his accusation as he is unjust in his criticism, Philip Experiens* has, I fear, little to hope on the borders of Paradise.

What Paul Jovius says of historians and the spirit of party had been said, long before him, by Diodorus Siculus. He is himself, also †, to be attended to only in certain things; since his own confession throws an air of falsehood over his whole history: for his confession allows that he wrote truly or falsely, as men

* *Historia de Rege Ulladislao seu clade Varnensi.*

† *Historiarum sui Temporis.*

courted or neglected his favour. Brantome, Scaliger, Bodin, Vossius, Osorius, and Balzac, therefore held him in contempt. His wit, the multitude of his anecdotes, his occasional humour, and his curious observations, however, gained him no inconsiderable fame; and he still continues to be quoted, though the authors, who quote him, feel and know, at the time, that he is not to be trusted.

Shall we now turn to Vertot? His histories of Revolutions have been much respected. A curious anecdote, however, is recorded of him. Intending to write a history of the knights of Malta, he sent to Italy for a collection of original materials concerning the siege of Rhodes. These materials did not arrive soon enough to answer the impatience of the historian, and he, therefore, wrote his narration without them. At length the documents arrived, and he opened the parcel; but finding what it contained, he cast it on the sofa behind him, coolly exclaiming, 'Mon siège est fait.'

This anecdote reminds me of Smollett. No history was ever composed with such expedition as his 'History of England.' It comprises a period of one thousand eight hundred and three years; that is, from the first invasion of Julius Cæsar to the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. Yet it was written and copied out for the press in the ludicrous space of fourteen months! Previous to publication, the author wrote to Lord Shelburne, requesting the patronage of the government; but having insinuated, that unless his wish were complied with, he should write in the spirit of the opposite party,

Lord Shelburne disdained reply. The historian kept his word; and this history, even now, is still held in no small share of esteem. *Ex uno disce multos!* Let us turn from their pages, and seek those scenes, in preference, where 'the breath of flowers enricheth the grass,' and where—

'Pure rills through vales of verdure warbling go,
While wonder, love, and joy, the peasant's heart o'erflow.'

Beattie.

Notwithstanding all that I have said, it is proper to confess, that as society is now constituted, the study of history is not only indispensable to the statesman, but to every member of the community. The time, however, I hope, will nevertheless come, when the history of the present past will be sunk into an oblivion even deeper than that of Egypt before the erection of the Pyramids. For certain I am, that no solid happiness can ever accrue to mankind at large, so long as the pages of history are equally indispensable to those who are governed, as to those who govern.

CVII.

WHO BEAR LIBELS WELL.

I WAS admitted to some of the secrets of masonry under the mastership of His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex. I confess I was struck with surprise that injunctions of secrecy should be carried to the extent of an oath. 'If masonic principles are good for one,' thought I, 'they must be good for all. Why not promulgate them?' Nor can I perceive, after an experience of more than eight-and-twenty years, that any solid

good arises out of this secrecy. But, being sworn to secrecy, I, of course, keep my oath. I would, however, presume to recommend the modification of it; since it is not only unmanly and unchristianly, but vulgar.

Walking, one day, near the new church in the Strand, I saw, exposed for sale, a packet sealed up, with a printed notification, that the secrets of Masonry were contained therein, and that they might be bought for half-a-guinea. 'Sir,' said I to the vendor—for I was moved with indignation at this violation of our sanctity—'it surprises me that a person of your apparent respectability should be connected with a rascal and a villain!'

'I am not connected with a rascal and a villain, sir,' answered he; 'and I dare you to the proof.' 'This packet, sir,' said I, 'contains the proof; for it contains the secrets of masonry.' 'Well, sir, and what then?' 'If it do contain the secrets of masonry,' I replied, 'the man who wrote them has broken a solemn oath, and therefore deserves the pillory. If it do not, he is a cheat, and deserves a public whipping.' 'The person who wrote them,' returned the vendor, 'placed them here for me to sell. I gain three shillings and sixpence by every one I do sell; and if I did not sell them, some other persons would. The same things would be sold whether I sell them or not; and I should lose, perhaps, fifteen shillings a week.' 'That is your justification?' 'It is.' 'Well; I accused only him, that wrote and sealed the packet; now I accuse you for selling it; the receiver is ————' 'Very likely, sir, very likely; but I am not going to lose fifteen shillings a-week to please you or any

‘man; and the sooner you get out of my shop the better; or, by the Eternal God, I’ll throw one of these packets at your head; and that, I hope, will teach you better manners for the future.’

Calling to mind the dignified precept, that

‘He, who fights and runs away,
May live to fight another day;’

I made as safe a retreat as Xenophon did out of Asia; and as quick an one as our neighbours are said to have done at the celebrated battle of Spurs; but I had never the pain of seeing the secrets of masonry exposed for sale in that shop afterwards*.

I must confess that masonry, to me, who have never conquered the dignity of Royal Arch, often calls to my recollection the German poet, Lessing. Having been initiated at Hamburgh; ‘Well,’ said one of his friends, ‘you have found nothing against the church, or the state, have you?’ ‘I wish to Heaven I had,’ answered the poet; ‘for then I should have found some thing.’

There were two celebrated masons at my initiation; Preston and Da Costa. Preston had rendered himself famous for having written ‘Illustrations of Masonry,’ and remarkable for having fallen in love with his wife for having sung in a very agreeable manner one of his masonic songs. He was the father of masonic literature. Da Costa was a Portuguese; and he after-

* In 1819 the chief of the Society of Masons in Germany died, and left among his papers a MS. containing a complete history of all the secret ceremonies, &c. of the institution. This MS. was printed, and caused a great sensation throughout the continent.

wards published an account of the persecution and trial he underwent in the dungeons of the Inquisition at Lisbon, for being a freemason; to which he added the bye-laws of that mysterious institution.

The lodge, to which we belonged, is called the 'Lodge of Antiquity;' between which and the Athol lodges there had subsisted a schism from the supersedal of Sir Christopher Wren in 1718;—that is, nearly one hundred years. In 1813, however, a reunion took place under the auspices of the Dukes of Kent and Sussex; the Duke of Athol having resigned the Grand Mastership of the Athol lodges in favour of the Duke of Kent expressly for that purpose.

The Duke of Sussex being our Master, I had frequent opportunities of seeing the manner in which one royal personage, at least, received the friendly respect of persons in a different station of life; and I must confess, that His Royal Highness seemed to take as much pleasure in conversing with private persons as with any of the peers by whom he was accompanied.

I mention all this for the purpose of remarking what, I believe, all know, who ever came in contact with any of the royal family; viz., that a more gracious, gentlemanly description of persons never adorned the precincts of a throne. A friend of mine, however, (a member of the lodge) having had the misfortune to offend the Royal Duke, and His Royal Highness having, in consequence, shown that he was offended, thought himself so ill-used, that he employed the best part of three months in writing a laboured invective against him.

Having closed his labours, he brought his lucubra-

tions to me, and desired my advice as to the best mode of publishing them. 'It is all very ingenious,' said I, after having occupied two hours in reading, 'well written, and may be all true;—every word that you have said. But, if you publish, I think you stand in chance of a prison.' 'God bless my soul! For what?' 'Is it possible, that you are unconscious of having written, not only one libel, but many?' 'Not one! It is truth, every word of it.' 'I am sure you think so.' 'I am certain of it.' 'Suppose it to be all truth; are you not aware that Lord Ellenborough has declared truth to be a greater libel than falsehood?' 'I do not care one farthing for Lord Ellenborough. Truth was never a libel yet, and never can be so. I'll brave all Lord Ellenborough's law can do.' My friend, however, thought proper to pause; and well it was he did so; for he learnt, shortly after, that the entire substance of his supposed facts was founded on misconstruction.

The duke, though of a noble mind and thoroughly good-humoured, was at one period of his life pestered, beyond any other man's endurance, with libels; but no one ever bore the annoyance of them more good-humouredly, or in a manner more gracefully dignified. His Royal Highness once said, 'Libels are infamous; but they keep us in health. Bitters, you know, are nauseous; but they are, nevertheless, very good for the stomach.'

I related this speech, one evening, to Fuseli. 'It was admirably said,' said he. 'I wish I had heard it many years ago, and I should not have suffered myself to be so dreadfully annoyed by critics and

' would-be critics as I have done. It is a fine sentence. ' I do not think it quite original ; but falling from the ' lips of a prince, it is worth a thousand ounces of gold.'

I am here reminded of the late Lord Byron and the present Marquis of Hertford. ' A libeller is the vilest ' of miscreants,' said Byron. ' Take my advice,' said the Marquis, in reference to the storm then raging in regard to my tragedy of the 'Italians*;' ' never read ' anything against yourself: I never do.'

CVIII.

WHO ARE EVER READY TO AVAIL THEMSELVES OF OTHER
MEN'S ATROCITIES.

THIS is a prevailing sin with all men, who mount high stations against the law of a land or the will of a people. They are more ready, however, to avail themselves, than to confess themselves. When Menas tells Sextus Pompey to let him cut the cable of the ship where he, Octavius, Anthony, and Lepidus, held a conference, that he may assassinate his rivals, Sextus replies:—

' This thou shouldst have *done*,
And *not have spoken of it*. In me 'tis villany ;

* It is now nearly eighteen years since this tragedy was sacrificed to the benign spirit of Party. The wound, given, has long been healed; but not the consequences. Time, however,—so just, for the most part, to others,—will, one day, perhaps, be just even to me. In this hope, I have written another drama; founded on the best parts of the last; and with what little farther skill, study and experience may have given. I have even had courage to perfect it for the stage:—

' But I must wait till Party shall be dead,
And Time propitious.'

In thee it had been good service.

————— Being done, unknown,
I should have found it afterwards well done;
But must condemn it now.'

Anthony and Cleopatra, act 2, sc. 7.

Cæsar declared, that if any one served him, he would, however bad in other respects, reward him as amply as if he were the best of men.

CIX.

WHO HAVE OBTAINED GREAT POWER IN THE FACE OF
CRAFT.

SOME men arrive at eminence, and retain their consequence, in a very fortunate manner. Thus, notwithstanding the worldly wisdom of Burleigh, the grace of Essex, the activity of Walsingham, and the intrigues of Leicester, Lord Howard's sturdy virtues gained for their possessor some of the highest offices of the government. He was Earl-Marshal, Lord High-Steward of the Household, Lord High-Admiral, and Lord Lieutenant-General of England, having, thus, not only the command of the royal household, but of the army and the fleet; and, what is scarcely less remarkable, he was a favourite with his sovereign, popular with the people, and unenvied by the nobility.

I am not aware, that there is a similar instance of this kind on record; and the more we consider it the more remarkable it becomes.

CX.

HONOUR AMONG THIEVES.

THE keeping of contracts is so convenient to all the pursuits of man, whether of good or of evil, that even

robbers are generally as strict in their observance of them, one with another, as the most equitable of men.

From this we might almost suppose, that justice and the keeping of contracts are innate laws of Nature; but Locke * clearly demonstrates, that robbers practise them merely as rules of convenience. Indeed, the poor and little have much more reason to rejoice at the institution and due operation of laws, than the rich and great. For the laws are the only shields the weak have against the strong. The strong could dispense with them; the weak never can †.

CXI.

WHO ARE TOO CUNNING TO WRITE A LETTER.

TULLY says, some of us degenerate into *wolves*, faithless and mischievous; others into *tigers*, wild and savage: but the greater part into *foxes*, 'fraudulent and little.

Many persons have an insurmountable objection to write. 'Do and say just what you please,' say they; 'but do, on no account, put pen to paper.' If you mean honestly and honourably, why not? I never hear these gentry argue, but I remember the Duke de Bouillon, who lived in the age of Henry IV., and whose main

* Vol. ii. c. 3, s. 2.

† The Chancellor d'Aguesseau drew up a plan for rendering the administration of the laws *gratuitous* throughout all France. A plan of this kind, duly guarded and administered, would make every one enamoured, not only of the laws, but of authority.

maxim was to be exceedingly cautious of giving any thing under his hand. 'A man,' said he, 'interprets what he has spoken as he pleases; and he agrees only to so much of it as he thinks proper, retrenching more or less. He approves, or disapproves, as he thinks convenient. But the case is not the same with regard to what is written.'

There is a manner of writing letters, exemplifying a curious description of fraud. Charles V. acted it. He made a speech at Rome in 1536, and sent copies of it to all the German circles. But all these copies were different; each one being altered in a manner to suit his purposes with those who were Catholics, and those who were Protestants. The cheat succeeded to a miracle. But how far more noble was the conduct of Ximenes! 'What have I to conceal?' said he; 'nothing! and when I write amiss, let my enemies have the full benefit of my own evidence.' For this reason he would never write in cypher.

'How slowly does his generous heart
Another's crime believe,
Who ne'er himself, with treacherous art,
Another could deceive*.

CXII.

WHO ADMIT NOTHING.

THIS is a species of cunning bordering on dishonesty, which may be exemplified in the instances of Lord Granville and Lord Ligonier. Doddington is the authority.

* *Metastasio; La Clemenza di Tito; Hoole.*

Conversing one day on the manner in which France might best be annoyed, Lord Chatham thought the best method was in keeping that country in continual alarm upon the coast. 'My Lord Granville,' said Lord Ligonier, 'your Lordship must admit ——' 'My Lord Ligonier,' returned Lord Granville, 'I admit nothing. Your Lordship is apt to admit; but I never admit anything.'

Men of this kind, even in the justest of accounts, or the wisest of arguments, admit nothing. Every thing must be proved; even the delivery of a rabbit. There is a cunning in this, unworthy a good cause; and, as it should be, exceedingly awaking of suspicions in a bad one. A good man loses by its use; a bad one stands self-condemned.

This reminds us of what Marmontel states of Mari-vaux. He would agree that a thing was true *to a certain point, or in a certain view*. 'But,' continues Marmontel*, 'there was always some restriction; some distinction to make, which no one could perceive but himself.' Are we uncharitable if we despise such men?

CXIII.

WHO LEARN FROM THEIR ENEMIES.

THE barbarians, in the time of Septimius Severus, began to learn the use and art of making the Roman weapons from the various emigrants, that fled into their country to avoid the severity of their sovereigns. The

* Mem., vol. ii. 125.

later barbarians*, in return, were all distinguished by some characteristic military excellence, of which the Romans did not fail to take advantage.

Peter the Great said of Charles XII., that the victories he gained over him would, one day, teach him to conquer him. The prediction was fulfilled. The Flemings had, previously, learnt the art of war of their persecutors, the Spaniards; and at length succeeded in establishing their commonwealth. Frederic the Great went farther. He made friends with his own mistakes, and took as much advantage of them as others do of their successes. 'My mistakes,' said he, 'make me resemble Atalanta. Every one of them is a golden apple.'

CXIV.

WHOSE ENMITY IS ADVANTAGEOUS.

I HAVE known many instances: I shall select, however, only one.

The Duke of —— made the fortune of his father's butler, after his father's death; not, however, out of any regard to the butler, but because the butler was inordinately hated by his Grace's brother. Had the butler enjoyed the good-will of Lord ——, he had remained a butler all the days of his life.

Aristotle says, we regard those who hate the men who hate us.

* Les Goths et les Vandales étoient redoutables l'épée à la main; les Huns étoient des archers admirables; les Suèves de bons hommes d'infanterie; les Alains étoient pesamment armés; et les Herules étoient une troupe légère, &c.—*Montesquieu; Grand. et Decad. des Romains, c. xx.*

CXV.

CASES IN WHICH DISUNION HAS CAUSED STRENGTH.

MACHIAVEL, in his discourse on the first decade of Livy, insists, that the jealousy and disagreements between the nobility and the people of Rome contributed, in a very great degree, to the power and freedom of that city.

This is contrary to the received axiom, 'that unity is strength.' Machiavel, however, is right. For the constant collision between those two parties produced all the laws in favour of liberty. Had the people been passive, they had been slaves. So the frequent jealousies, existing between the nobility and the sovereigns of England, paved the way for a more ample consideration of the people; and, lastly, to the final establishment of liberty itself. May that liberty be perpetual! and may it be perpetually on the alert to insure good results! True liberty never sleeps. It is as watchful for good, as it is ever-active against evil.

CXVI.

WHO CONTEND WITH INFERIORS.

MICHAEL ANGELO would never recognise the insults of inferior minds. 'He who contests with the mean,' he was accustomed to say, 'gains a victory over no one.' And this saying reminds one of the shield-bearer of Onesilaus the Persian. 'I hear*,' said the

* Herodotus.

satrap, 'that the horse of Artybius, by his feet and teeth, materially assists his master against an adversary. Deliberate on this, and tell me which you will encounter,—the man or the horse.' 'Sir,' answered the shield-bearer, 'I am ready to engage with either, or both; or, indeed, to do whatever you command. But I should rather think, it will be more consistent for you, being a prince and general, to contend with one who is a prince and general also. If you should, fortunately, kill a person of this description, you will acquire great glory; or if you fall by his hand,—which Heaven avert!—the calamity is somewhat softened by the rank of the conqueror. It is for us of inferior order to oppose men like ourselves. As to the horse, do not concern yourself about what he has been taught; I will venture to say, that he shall never be troublesome to any one again.' There was much sound sense in this; and it cannot be denied, that the shield-bearer seems to have been a wiser man than his master.

Men of learning and science may take lessons from this. Linnæus, indeed, seems in effect to have done so. 'If you will listen to me as a friend,' wrote he to Haller*, 'I would advise you to write no answers to Hamberger or such people. He is not on a level with you; and the more he is your inferior, the more consequence you give a man, who would otherwise remain in obscurity. One good example:—Boerhaave answered no one. I recollect his saying to me, one

* Upsal, Sept. 13, 1748.

‘ day, “ You should never reply to any controversial
 ‘ “ writer. Promise me, you will not.” I promised,
 ‘ and have benefited much by keeping my promise.’

Who would not rather die by the sword of a general than by that of a common soldier? The rank of the conqueror qualifies the agony of death. There is not much philosophy in this, it is true; but much common feeling.

‘ Hoc tamen infelix miseram solabere mortem;
 Æneæ magni dextrâ cadis.’—Æn., x. 829.

An early adventurer to South America was greatly perplexed at the stupidity of the Peruvians:—‘ One knows not what inducements to set before them.’ Napoleon, too, is said to have been disgusted with the want of military science of those opposed to him. ‘ I am persuaded,’ says his secretary Bourrienne, ‘ that he felt great disappointment that the Archduke Charles was not appointed to oppose him; for often have I heard him complain of the unskilfulness of the enemies’ generals, whose faults, though he ably profited by them, seemed to take from him the full honours of victory.’ Though I hated this man, when living, I cannot but (*sometimes*) admire him, now that he is dead. All leopards have beautiful skins!

CXVII.

A SPECIES OF ARBITRATOR.

THERE is an order of men so well characterized by Mr. Burke, that I shall not presume to weaken its impression by any illustrative remarks of my own. ‘ Be-

‘ lieve a man who has seen much, and observed some-
‘ thing. I have seen in the course of my life a great
‘ many of that family of men. They are generally
‘ chosen because they have no opinion of their own ;
‘ and as far as they can be got in good earnest to em-
‘ brace any opinion, it is that of whoever happens to
‘ employ them (neither longer or shorter, narrower or
‘ broader), with whom they have no discussion or con-
‘ sultation. The only thing which occurs to such a
‘ man, when he has got a business for others into his
‘ hands, is how to make his own fortune out of it. The
‘ person he is to treat with, is not, with him, *an adver-*
‘ *sary over whom he is to prevail, but a new friend*
‘ *he is to gain* ; therefore he always systematically be-
‘ trays some part of his trust. Instead of thinking how
‘ he shall defend his ground to the last, and, if forced to
‘ retreat, how little he shall give up, this kind of man
‘ considers how much of the interest of his employer he
‘ is to sacrifice to his adversary. Having nothing but
‘ himself in view, he knows, that in serving his princi-
‘ pal with zeal, he must probably incur some resent-
‘ ment from the opposite party. His object is to obtain
‘ the good-will of the person with whom he contends,
‘ that when an agreement is made, he may join in re-
‘ warding him. I would not take one of these as my
‘ arbitrator in a dispute for so much as a fish-pond—
‘ for if he reserved the mud to me, he would be sure to
‘ give the water that fed the pool to my adversary.’ Is
‘ not this a clear picture? Neither Holbein nor Van-
‘ dyke ever finished a truer.

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CXVIII.

WHO REFUSE ARBITRATIONS.

THOSE, who refuse to have an affair arbitrated by an honourable and qualified authority, confess, by that refusal, the weakness of their cause. The Swiss, however, stand justified in disdaining to arbitrate, as they have in a multitude of instances*, with those whom they suspected of having had designs upon their liberties.

The offer of conciliation should, in honour and correct feeling, proceed from the oldest, the most powerful, or the best. 'With a dignity worthy your station, my 'lords,' said Lord Chatham, pleading the cause of America, 'make the first advances to concord, to peace, and to happiness. Concession comes with better 'grace, and more salutary effect, from superior power. 'It reconciles superiority of power with the feelings of 'man, and establishes solid confidence on the founda- 'tions of affection and gratitude.'

Negotiations* for peace between two hostile powers are, in most cases, commenced through the medium of a neutral power. The French Directory, therefore, by replying verbally, that they could not listen to any indirect application for peace, through the medium of a neutral party, put a sword into the hands of the British minister, which he was too shrewd to neglect making a corresponding use of†.

* Vide Vattel, b. ii. c. xviii. s. 332.

† Vide Pitt's Speech, Dec. 30, 1796, on the failure of Lord Malmesbury to negotiate a peace.

CXIX.

WITH WHOM IT IS A DIFFICULTY TO BEGIN.

SOME men love to attempt flying beyond their strength, and others are content to creep beneath their power. Lucan may be cited as an example of the former; Silius Italicus of the latter.

With some the only difficulty is to begin. Once begun, the work is finished; and of this we may cite one instance in the poet Gray*. It is, nevertheless, true, that no one ever finished more slowly or more elaborately than himself.

* 'When the Duke of Grafton was elected Chaucellor of the University of Cambridge, Gray, from an impulse of what he looked on as a species of duty, offered to write the ode for his Grace's installation. He considered it, nevertheless, as a sort of task, as a set composition; and a considerable time passed before he could prevail upon himself, or rather before he actually felt the power, to begin it. But, one morning, Mr. Nicholls called on him, and knocking at his chamber door, Mr. Gray got up hastily, and threw it open himself, and running up to him, in a hurried voice and tone exclaimed—

“Hence, avaunt;—’tis holy ground!”

‘Mr. Nicholls was so astonished, that he thought his senses were deranged; but Mr. Gray, in a moment after, resumed his usual pleasant manner, and repeating several verses at the beginning of that inimitable composition, said—“Well, I have begun the ode, and now shall finish it.” It would seem, by this interesting anecdote, that the genius of Gray sometimes resembled the armed apparition in Shakspeare’s master-tragedy—“He would not be commanded!”—Mathias, ii. 600. 4to.

CXX.

WHO EXALT THEIR ENEMIES INTO IMPORTANCE.

IF it show want of policy to ruin rivals, it shows not less so to raise enemies to undue importance. Burke was guilty of this in respect to Paine; especially when he said of him, that he was an amphibious animal, part American, part French, and part English; but 'possessing a sufficiency of each to create confusion in them all.'

The remark applies equally to Watson, Bishop of Llandaff. Had his Apology for the Bible never appeared, Paine's attack upon its authority would, probably, before this have perished in the mass. Mandeville's Fable of the Bees, too, had, probably, fallen almost still-born from the press, had not Fiddes, Law, Hutchinson, Warburton, and Berkeley, extended its fame, and therefore its influence, by answering it with so much virulence, violence, and contempt. Warburton knew better, and ought to have guarded himself from such a consequence; for he writes thus to Dr. Birch* :—'I hope that no one will be so indiscreet as to notice the book, called the Moral Philosopher, publicly, though it be in the fag-end of an objection. It is that indiscreet conduct in our defenders of religion, that conveys so many worthless books from hand to hand.'

To cast contempt upon a warrior is, sometimes, the best method of fighting him; but when the court of

* Newarke, Aug. 17, 1737. Sloane MSS., No. 4320.

Vienna laughed at Gustavus Adolphus, called him a 'King of Snow,' and declared that he would melt as he advanced farther south, the event proved how fatal it is to laugh when we ought rather to prepare. Shall we be idle enough to take a shaft from such a quiver? To do so,—let our strength be ever so great,—is to resemble the Caspian; which, though fed by a multitude of rivers, never seems to increase.

There is one point, however, that all men ought to regard:—*never to despise a small enemy*. Man is equal to all the larger beasts of the earth; but he is unable to contend with the smaller ones. An army of lions can be subdued in a day; but an army of locusts baffles our strength.

CXXI.

WHOSE NAMES ARE ENOUGH.

'Plunge not into Avernus: Avernus is too dark for you.'

ONE passage of a flock of reindeer over a field of grass is sufficient to render it useless to the Lapland and Norwegian farmer for the rest of the year; for cows will eat no grass over which the foot of a reindeer has passed. Thus is it also with some men; for certain it is, that there are some whom we can bear neither to associate with, to accost, and scarcely even to look at.

As there are some flowers, some birds, and some quadrupeds, whose mere names are enough (wormwood, the hoopoe, and the wolf); so are there some men,—those, for instance, who wear a continual austerity of

smile; who laugh, as they affect to assure us, their enemies to scorn; and who are so enamoured of their own actions and sentiments, that they would almost approve a theft, a murder, or a treason, if committed by themselves. Too sullen to give pleasure; too proud to receive it; they have a hard and unrelenting furrow, down which never stole one tear either of joy or of commiseration. Rough, violent, and insolent, they love not even so much as the mother that gave them birth. Men, whom we can neither sport with in the hours of our cheerfulness, nor sympathize with in the hours of their distress. They are continually insulting their neighbours; they banish affection from their hearths; their roughness is the personification of vulgarity; and their sententiousness amounts to insolence, and sometimes even to ferocity. Any men rather than these!

CXXII.

WHO, IN RUINING THEIR RIVALS, RUIN THEMSELVES.

‘Lands, intersected by a narrow frith,
Abhor each other. Mountains, interposed,
Make enemies of nations, who had else,
Like kindred drops, been mingled into one.’

Cowper.

ABOUT three months after the death of the Marquis of Londonderry, a friend of mine saw Lord Liverpool stand some few minutes before the monuments of Pitt and Fox, sometimes looking at the one and sometimes at the other. Meditating on this circumstance, two or three years after, I could not but lament that Sir James

Scarlett should have been practically right when he stated in the House of Commons, that he had once intended to bring in a bill of legal reform ; but that he had, afterwards, declined doing so from a conviction, that all measures of that sort, to be successful, must originate on the ministerial side of the house. Politicians, if they can prevent it, will seldom permit their rivals to do them harm, or their country good. Lord Liverpool could not see, or would not see, the absolute necessity of legal reform.

Persia produces the most beautiful of flowers, and the most nauseous of gums. There, too, they have a saying, that though two dervises can sleep on one carpet, two kings cannot rest in one kingdom. Hence the friends of a rival to a throne are more rigorously dealt with in that country than in any other. No two equal lights can be tolerated in one picture ; hence the uncle of the present King of Persia caused five thousand inhabitants of Kerman to be massacred, and five thousand to be deprived of sight, for having permitted his rival to escape the walls of their city. ‘ Vultures,’ said his majesty, ‘ purify the air of Cairo, and these executions shall purify the heat of Kerman.’

Sallust states, that when the Romans had subdued all their rivals, they, almost instantly, sunk into two vices, immediately opposite to each other ; avarice and luxury. Sallust here makes a mistake. He means rapacity, not avarice. Avarice grasps to hoard ; rapacity to spend.

The conquest of Thebes promoted the ruin of Athens ; and that of Carthage paved the way for the usurpation

of Cæsar. To ruin a rival, then, is always a dubious policy, and, not unfrequently, a policy that leads to ruin, that can never be redeemed.

The most celebrated rivals in history, as every one knows, were the Spartans and Athenians, the Romans and Carthaginians. Paternus says of the latter, that there existed between them, at all times, either a war, preparations for war, or a deceitful peace. To these instances may be added the Germans and Turks, the Florentines and Venetians, the Spaniards and Portuguese, the French and English. As to factions,—the most famous in recent times have been those of the Guelphs and Guibellines* ; and in respect to rival warriors,—the most eminent have been Francis I. and Charles V., Tamerlane and Bajazet, Louis XIV. and William III., Charles XII. and Peter the Great.

I never read the respective histories of these countries, factions, and heroes, but I remember Snyders' picture of a boar-hunt (now in the Grosvenor gallery), where the pursuers seem to be as much tortured as the pursued: and such it ought to be.

In ruining their rivals, it is certain that men frequently ruin themselves; but I could never see the propriety of an assertion, I once heard Mr. Wilberforce make in the House of Commons †; viz., that a sacrifice, which would ruin the British navy, would eventually lead, also, to the ruin of America.

* For the origin and progress of these rivalships, see Muratori, *Antiq. Medii Ævi*, tom. iv. 603.

† Feb. 13, 1812.

CXXIII.

WHO WORSHIP THEIR ENEMIES.

‘ Yes, like the polypus, ’tis said,
 These spirits are all tail and head ;
 And with the polypus, we know,
 New heads and tails will quickly grow.’

The Battle of the Gemi, 1764.

THE most timid animals are, for the most part, the most difficult to be tamed. This is not the case with men ; for it is fear only that keeps most of them in any sort of subjection. Success puts even a child into courage ; and it is dangerous to attack even a coward, who is cooped up in a corner so closely, that he has no means of escape but by the force of his arm.

Some nations worship the devil. The ancient Egyptians adored the ichneumon, because it was supposed to destroy crocodiles ; and they worshipped crocodiles, lest it should destroy them. The Getæ*, on the other hand, menaced their god, whenever it thundered, by throwing their weapons into the air ; and the Atlantes of Ethiopia † execrated the sun, every morning, for scorching their fields and drying up their streams.

* Herodotus, *Melpom.*, c. 94.

† *Plin. Nat. Hist.*, v. c. viii. *Solinus*, c. iv.

CXXIV.

WHO LEAVE LEGACIES TO THEIR ENEMIES.

MANY men leave excellent legacies to their enemies in the way of advice or of information. Thus Napoleon recompensed England for all the losses she incurred during his administration, by leaving them, through Las Cases, a legacy in one short sentence, more valuable than an army of men: ‘The English may be omnipotent, if they confine themselves to their navy; but they will endanger their superiority, complicate their affairs, and insensibly lose their importance, if they persevere in keeping soldiers on the continent.’

Posterity will see whether or not our statesmen will have sufficient wisdom to profit by this legacy;—a legacy far more valuable than gold or diamonds.

Genius leaves legacies to all men.

CXXV.

WHO HAVE NO FIXED PRINCIPLES OF ACTION.

THOUGH I despise obstinacy, I admire consistency. I can, therefore, never reflect with satisfaction on the conduct of the second William Pitt, wherein he forsook the path his ‘green’ integrity had so wisely pointed out. Castlereagh did the same in 1793. Even after the death of Louis XVI., Castlereagh was a vehement reformer. But we can tolerate in a Castlereagh what it would be a great stretch of philosophy, indeed, to tolerate in a man so pre-eminently gifted as William Pitt.

We regard the conduct of Blake in England, and of Moreau in France, after a different manner. Blake declared, that he would fight for his country, let him receive orders from whom he would: and Moreau stated, that he would fight for the existing government against the enemies of France, until the attainment of an honourable peace, let the government be in the hands of a Robespierre, a Barras, a Bourbon, or a Buonaparte: and such will ever be the conduct of men when guided by fixed principles of action. A country is not to be lost because some of its citizens chance to be traitors.

We admire courage; but what is valour in one situation is rashness in another. We approve calmness; but when insulted, a spirited resentment is not only becoming an honourable mind, but a prudent one. We respect benevolence; but benevolence abroad, when our children are starving at home, is not only a folly but an injustice and a cruelty. We despise obstinacy; yet consistency (in right objects,) is not only one of the noblest, but one of the most useful of all qualities.

CXXVI.

WHO ARE IN PERPETUAL MOTION.

HEALTHY children are ever so: and in this they resemble the picture, perpetually presented in the universe. For the universe, as Montaigne rightly observes, is in one perpetual motion; and constancy itself is only a more languid exhibition of that motion, which is the

very principle of existence : and this truism reminds me of a passage in Cowper :—

‘ By ceaseless actions, all, that is, subsists.
 Constant rotation of th’ unwearied wheel,
 That Nature rides upon, maintains her health,
 Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads
 An instant’s pause, and lives but while she moves.’

Children are for ever reminding me of this phenomenon. I seldom see them, therefore, trundling their hoops, but I think of planets, satellites, and comets ; suns, systems, clusters, and nebulae.

CXXVII.

WHO COME TO THE POINT AT ONCE.

THE highest perfection the soul can attain is said, by some writers, to consist in action without passion. It appears, however, problematical, whether passion does not mix itself with all action ; activity of the body, or of the mind, being ‘ sine quâ non ;’ if not ‘ con amore,’ at least, ‘ con spirito, aut ab necessitate.’

Some men’s activity is so immediate, that there appears but a small interval between conception and execution. At one time they resemble a soldier hurling his javelin ; at another a musician tuning his harp.

The power of coming to the point at once was one of the qualities of Lord Chatham : and Grattan has well alluded to this point in his intellectual character. ‘ He did not conduct the understanding, like Murray, through the painful subtlety of argumentation ; nor was he, like Townshend, for ever on the rack of exertion ; but

‘ rather lightened on the subject; and reached the point
 ‘ by the flashings of his mind, which, like his eye, were
 ‘ felt, but could not be followed.’

CXXVIII.

WHO TRIUMPH FOR COMING IN AT THE DEATH.

PAUSANIAS relates*, that he saw, in one of the cities of Greece, a picture of Ocnus, painted by Polignotus, who was represented as twisting a rope, and a female ass standing by him, who ate the rope as fast as he twisted it. Here, methinks, we have an emblem of those, who suffer themselves to be robbed of the fruits of their labours; and the robbers we may associate with those vipers, which are said to take up their abode in the branches and round the body of the balsam tree, and calmly sip the odoriferous juices of its leaves and flowers.

Many are the men, who are ever ready with hooks to reap the harvest of another’s vineyard; and melancholy, pre-eminently melancholy, is it to be one of those thus injured; being, unwittingly, like the ox, which—

‘ Struggling, groans beneath the cruel hand
 E’en of the clown he feeds; and that, perhaps,
 To swell the riot of th’ autumnal feast,
 Won by his labour!’

Napoleon reaped the benefit of all the courage, skill, and barbarism of his officers; and this may serve to remind us of what Tacitus says in reference to the Germans. ‘ They esteem it an inviolable duty,’ says

* Lib. x. c. 29.

he*, 'to defend their chief, to maintain his dignity, 'and to yield him the glory of all their exploits. The 'chiefs fight for victory; the attendants only for the 'chief.' What extraordinary blockheads have the majority of mankind—in all ages—been!

It is mortifying to see a man, who has fought the battle, faced the enemy in all directions, kept them at bay, and that for years, in heat and in cold, in sickness and in health;—and then to behold others, who have neither fought nor struggled, suffered nor planned;—I say it mortifies one's spirit to see the former pushed aside, and thought little of, their services forgot, and their valour and skill unappreciated; and the latter, because they have been in at the death, as it were, to claim the honour of the victory, and ride in the chariot of triumph. And yet all this is far from being as uncommon as an Aurora Borealis.

CXXIX.

WHO SACRIFICE GREAT INTERESTS TO LITTLE ONES.

SOME fruits become ripe; and yet never sweeten.

Many men sacrifice real interests to passions. Thus Perseus † knew better how to keep his money than his country. He may therefore be said to have resembled a merchant, who loses all in a tempest, rather than cast a part of his cargo into the sea. To lose a part to save the whole is a policy, beyond the capacity of ninety persons out of an hundred. All or—nothing! To be a child, in their estimation, is far better than being a man.

* De Mor. Germ.

† Livy.

It was justly argued, a short time since*, in the House of Commons, that the science of politics is essentially experimental; not like the axioms and definitions of the geometer, of intrinsic truth, uninfluenced by time and place;—but depending on experience, and, therefore, as changing as the circumstances on which all experience is founded. ‘Had our ancestors,’ continued the honourable member †, with an extended arm and a glowing eye, ‘had our ancestors been as fearful of change as their sons, those sons would have had little to boast of.’ Little indeed can be expected from any legislature, whose bond of union is not the public good, founded on the principles of justice, truth, and sound humanity.

A few days after this debate the House of Commons passed the Reform Bill ‡. The tones of the members were very curious. When the Speaker put the question, that the bill do pass, the ‘noes’ were delivered in ‘a snappish tone of discontent;’ the ‘ayes’ in loud ‘volleys of hilarity and joy,’ &c.

By this act, the public door was opened;—

————— ‘She open’d; but to shut
Excell’d her power.’

In a collection of five thousand persons, the error of preferring small interests to great ones is fatal to three thousand three hundred and thirty. Indeed, speaking by a figure, they are almost as numerous as passenger pigeons in North America. One of the kings of Spain

* March 17, 1832.

† Mr. Macaulay, member for Calne.

‡ March 24.

said, 'I would give up all claims to Gibraltar, if I could but possess the Philippine Islands in peace.' Yet, as Lord Stormont observed, some time after, to Mr. Hussey*, 'If Spain would lay before me the map of her empire, to take my choice of an equivalent, I should not be able in three weeks to find, in all the dominions of Spain, what, in my judgment, would balance the cession of Gibraltar.'

In respect to Portugal, has she not, for nearly two centuries, preferred small interests to great, in all things, if we except her adherence to treaties with Great Britain? She has. She has neglected the growth of wool, the production of oil and bees' wax, and the cultivation of the white mulberry. She has, therefore, been an importing country. She has drained her own villages to people those of her colonies; her colonies are separating from her, and leaving her to the enjoyment of a discontented populace, a poor, insolent, and unprincipled nobility, a despotic government, and a lazy, ignorant, Jesuitical priesthood.

There was never a greater folly, nor scarcely a greater baseness, than that of Charles II.; when, with the assistance of his ministry, significantly styled the Cabal, he, in conjunction with Louis XIV., waged war against the Dutch. It was a war of two kings against civil and religious freedom. But the utmost Charles could gain, was the assistance of the French king against his own subjects, a few towns, and the ruin of a commercial rival:—to transfer that rival's army, fleet,

* Coxe's Mem., Kings of Spain of the House of Bourbon, vol. v. 75.

resources, country, and subsequently the Netherlands, not to himself but to Louis XIV. ! Indeed this king, throughout his whole reign, sacrificed great interests not only to small, but even diminutive ones.

Henry VIII. permitted Spain and Portugal to engross the East and West Indies, and neglected even the discoveries of Cabot, in order to establish an improbability on the continent. William III. was unmindful of the internal polity of his kingdom, that he might, the more effectually, watch over the schemes of contending nations. George I. and George II. laid themselves open to the censure of Britain, by entertaining too great a partiality to Hanover ; and George III. suffered himself to be divested of part of a fine empire, rather than make concessions, that would have preserved the integrity of the whole. Subsequently to this, instead of insisting upon his ministers operating on a large scale, for great interests, he permitted them to carry his arms against islands in the West Indies, which were gained, not for permanent possession, but merely as equivalents to restore. Hence a lady was much admired for having said to Mr. Pitt, on hearing that one or two islands had surrendered in the West Indies,—‘ I protest, Mr. Pitt, if you go on thus, ‘ you will soon be master of every island in the world, ‘ except two ;—England and Ireland.’

In 1276, Wales was united to England ; in 1706 Scotland ; and in 1801 Ireland. Yet nothing could exceed the discontent of those countries at such beneficial events. In their vanity at losing a phantom, they lost all feeling of benefit. They felt as Hungary

and Bohemia felt, and, I believe, feel still, in regard to Austria.

Most persons supposed, when, in consequence of the victories of the French, and the defection of the tributary states, the German empire was dissolved, and Francis II. exchanged the title of Emperor of Germany for that of Emperor of Austria, that he did so from a mere affection for his hereditary states; and therefore he was accused of sacrificing a great interest to a less: but it requires little political information to know, that, in solid power, he is much greater now than he was then. For it is impossible to forget that Germany was, for many centuries, a prey to the presumption of the popes, to constant disputes arising out of claims relative to possession; and to innumerable rebellions on the part of the tributary states.

Many Florentine statesmen have desired to enlarge their territories; but Florence would derive less real benefit from a part of Milan, than she does from the possession of the busts of the Roman emperors, the group of Laocoon and his sons, two statues of Apollo, the statue by Cleomenes, the Medicean Venus, and the many transcendent specimens of the pictorial art in the palace of the Pitti*.

CXXX.

WHO ARE MARTYRS TO THEIR OWN CONCEPTIONS.

ARCHBISHOP LAUD was of this order: a French writer has, therefore, with great point, taken advantage of

* How little some ministers know, in respect to the commercial value of fine specimens of art, may be learnt from Mr. Perceval's answer, when advised to purchase the Orleans Gallery:—'I would not give 200*l.* for them.'

this weakness to draw a picture, which, if we could strictly reduce men into classes, orders, genera, species, as we do quadrupeds, vegetables, and minerals, might operate as descriptive of a peculiar species.

‘ Archbishop Laud,’ says M. Guizot*, ‘ sought friendship with none ; foresaw resistance from none ; endured opposition from none ; and all this from a persuasion that power constitutes, in virtuous hands, the instrument of all good.’ To this idea he became a dupe, and fell, as it were, a martyr. ‘ In fact,’ says the historian, ‘ he was ever the dupe of some strong conception, which exercised over him the empire at once of a passion and of a duty.’

Foreign writers often judge men more critically than historians of their own country.

CXXXI.

WHO TRACE TO LITTLE CAUSES.

NEITHER Tacitus nor Davila ascribe great events to whim, caprice, or any other paltry cause †. Napoleon, however, acknowledged that, in military operations, some things depend ‘ on a dog’s barking, or a goose’s cackling ;’ and this supplies the reason, we are told, why he was more solicitous in watching, than in tempting events. ‘ He beheld them,’ says Bourrienne‡, ‘ in their progress of preparation and maturity ; when, suddenly seizing, he directed them at will.’

In some men’s minds all causes are great ; even those that lead to little things.

* Hist. de la Rév. d’Angleterre.

† I am indebted for this remark to Warton. See his Edit. of Pope, vol. iii. 192.

‡ Mem. i. 275.

CXXXII.

WHO NEVER COURT.

THIS was the foible of Archbishop Laud. ‘He did ‘court persons too little,’ says Lord Clarendon; ‘nor ‘cared to make his designs appear as candid as they ‘were, by showing them in any other dress than their ‘own natural beauty; though, perhaps, in too rough ‘a manner; and did not consider enough what men ‘said, or were like to say of him.’ This disposition assimilates itself with a passage in one of Gibbon’s letters to Garrick* :—

‘With regard to the wish which Lord Camden so ‘politely expresses, of my being made known to him, ‘you must give me leave to say, that if he were still a ‘chancellor or a minister, I might, perhaps, be inclined ‘to meet his advances with some degree of coldness ‘and reserve; but as he is now reduced to nothing ‘more than a great man, I shall eagerly embrace the ‘first proper occasion of paying my respects to him, ‘and shall consider the honour of his acquaintance, as ‘the most satisfactory reward of my labour.’

Always to court is a meanness; never to court is an insolence.

CXXXIII.

WHO ATTEMPT TO HEW BLOCKS WITH A RAZOR.

THIS is a very idle attempt indeed. It is worse than even casting pearls. ‘If,’ said Demosthenes to the Athenians, ‘I considered you as being like the Cyth-

* March 11, 1776. Garrick Correspond. ii. 145.

'nians, and such people, I would not recommend you to adopt sentiments so elevated.' The finest spirits, however, sometimes turn out, on some subjects, to be little better than blocks. They see errors, when too late. I was, last night, (Sept. 20, 1831) in the Gallery of the House of Commons. The subject of debate was the Reform Bill; and Mr. Macaulay made the following remarks:—

'Appeals have been made to the House of Lords, calling upon it to ponder well upon the consequences of disappointing the desires and refusing the just rights of the people. Are there no memorials in a neighbouring kingdom? Have they never seen or heard of the long line of palaces which have been converted into lodging-houses? Have they never seen the ruins of castles in the same country? and do they not know, that from those castles an aristocracy as proud, as polished, as powerful, and as wealthy as the world ever saw, have been driven forth as exiles in a country where their religion is proscribed, or compelled to act as woodmen in the back settlements of America, or as teachers of the French language? Why did that ruin fall upon that nobility? Why was their heritage given to a stranger, and their honours crumbled into the dust? Because they had no sympathy with the people; and because they called those theorists and speculators, whose advice, had they practically listened to it, might and would have preserved them.'

We have yet to see, whether arguments of this kind are to fly with the hurricane, and no one take heed.

May 6, 1832.—They would not take heed ; and nothing but the fortunate decision of the House of Commons could have preserved the country from the fury of a whirlwind. There are some men, who will never see, till others are almost blind with looking.

CXXXIV.

THE MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM.

WHEN political parties rage highly, none are more open to misrepresentation and calumny, than those who, speaking boldly and openly, give evidence of—

‘ A firm, unshaken, uncorrupted soul.’

The Marquis of Rockingham, however, escaped this tribute. Chesterfield says of Mr. Pelham, that, though an inelegant speaker, he wore a certain candour that obtained for him a general attention and a general credit. The Marquis was superior to this. ‘ The virtues of his public and private life,’ says the inscription on his mausoleum, ‘ were not, in him, of different characters.’

Thank Heaven ! One epitaph has at length been found to speak the truth. ‘ It was the same feeling, benevolent, liberal mind, which, in the internal relations of life, conciliated the unfeigned love of those, who see men as they are, which made him an inflexible patriot.’

The Marquis was one of the few men that have lived, who have seen correctly, acted correctly, and been correctly appreciated ; and by none better than

his wife, the marchioness. 'She cherished his memory,' says Sir James Smith*, 'with a fondness that delighted in speaking of him to those she esteemed, and in connecting some reminiscence of him with every pursuit of her life.' 'His mind,' said the marchioness, in a letter to that elegant botanist, 'had the happiness of taking a comprehensive view of a subject at one glance, which seemed to require ages of investigation.'

I love the memory of the marquis; not only because he was an honest and able statesman, but because he was a lover of Nature in the most comprehensive meaning we can attach to that term.

CXXXV.

WHO ACT FIRST AND MEDITATE AFTERWARDS.

NAPOLÉON was an example of this. While the people were voting him Consul for life, he went to Malmaison. There he reflected on what he had done. 'While passion urged him on,' says Bourrienne, 'he saw but his object; that attained, he examined the obstacles which he might have encountered.'

He was often too hasty; but he had still policy enough to confess. It was fortunate for him that Talleyrand or Bourrienne was mostly at hand. 'You understand me,' said he, one day, to the latter, when he had paused in the execution of certain orders he had received for immediate execution: 'you under-

* *Memoirs of Sir James Smith*, vol. ii. p. 7.

‘ stand me, and so does Talleyrand. It is thus I should
 ‘ be served. Others are too prompt. They leave me
 ‘ no time for reflection.’

CXXXVI.

SIC VOS NON VOBIS.

‘ Silk-worms—busy at their looms,
 Do make their webs both winding-sheets and tombs;
 Thus to th’ ungrateful world bequeathing all
 Their lives have gotten, at their funeral.’

Peacham’s Emblems.

YESTERDAY I saw a copy of Domenichino’s Communion of St. Jerome, which Nicholas Poussin compared to the Transfiguration of Raphael. This *copy* sold for fifty pounds; while the *original* brought Domenichino not more than fifty crowns!

The man that reaps, not only receives wages, but a harvest feast; while he who sowed the corn has, probably, not a sheaf to sit upon. The best men reward thus; even those who would remind us of Salvator’s picture of Pythagoras, paying the fisherman for leave to emancipate the fish he had caught.

‘ As a dog, that turns the spit,
 Bestirs and plies his feet,
 To clink the wheel; but all in vain;
 His own weight brings him down again;
 And still he ’s in the self-same place
 Where at his setting out he was.’

This passage from Butler gave, perhaps, an amusing hint to Prior:—

‘ A squirrel spent his little rage
In jumping round a rolling cage ;
The cage, as either side turn'd up,
Striking a ring of bells a-top.
Moved in the orb, pleased with the chimes,
The foolish creature thinks he climbs ;
But here and there, turn wood and wire,
He never gets five inches higher.’

How calmly some men, and even some women, look on while others are starving ! ‘ They have not laboured ‘ in our vineyard,’ say they ; ‘ and therefore need not ‘ be paid.’

Yet they bore all the heat and burthen of the day. They taught others in what manner to cut the stalks from the vines, to throw them into the baskets, to cast them into the vats, to express the juice, to put it into casks, and roll it into their cellars. The reward?— The pleasure of seeing with what ease and grace the lookers-on pour the wine into their goblets, put it to their lips, and drink it deliciously up !

It must ever be conceded, that it is a pre-eminent hardship that the hard-wrought earnings of men of large families, and of small means, should be compelled to contribute to the superfluities of the lazy ; who, instead of being grateful for the service, stare God, as it were, in the face, and regard the persons who support them with impertinent disdain. Were not the hope of immortality firmly planted in the mind, we should

sometimes inquire, perhaps with indignation, why some are fated to enjoy unmerited favour, and others to endure unmerited disgrace.

Solomon says, 'a like event happeneth to all; the 'good and the bad;' and Lucretius records, in his description of the plague, that those who died soonest were the most worthy. 'Thou art an infidel,' said the sailors to Diagoras; 'our taking thee on board has 'been the cause of this storm. The gods are angry 'with us.' 'Look at those ships,' replied Diagoras; 'they are in as great danger as we are. Am I aboard 'of them too?'

CXXXVII.

WHO ASK ADVICE AFTER THEY HAVE ACTED.

SOME persons ask advice after the deed is performed on which they desire an opinion; others have great tact in sounding their ministers, friends, or solicitors, on subjects on which they have already determined to act.

Guicciardini* accuses Pope Clement VII. of having always considered that advice the best, which he had neglected.

To ask advice of a friend, after we have acted, is an unwarrantable liberty.

Most persons are very saucy about advice. They remember, I suppose, the opinion of Lord Shaftesbury, that asking advice is only giving another man an oppor

* Lib. xvi.

tunity of showing his vanity and wisdom, and of raising himself in his own esteem by our defects. Such is, assuredly, sometimes the case. But advice from a competent person is of more value than gold itself. It preserves the state. Were I capable of giving advice, I must respect a man much before I would give it; from others I should almost demand the fee of a hundred guineas. Not for the value; but because men succeed, or guard against evils, *by their own advice*; and fail, or fall, only *by the advice of friends!*

Ask advice, and follow your own. That is, your own, after you have heard what your friend has to advise. This is wisdom; but do not follow your own because it is your own, nor his because it is his.

In respect to seeking advice from relatives, there are two passages I have somewhere read, which I shall combine into one short paragraph. Relatives are not only irksome in adversity, but insupportable; since they abound so much in reproach and advice, and so little in essential assistance. If strangers cannot help us in their purses, they will, at least, not insult us with their tongues.

CXXXVIII.

WHO GIVE REASONS FOR ALL THEY DO.

SOME sovereigns delight in doing just what they desire, and giving no reasons, bad or good, for that which may be done. Queen Elizabeth, however, was not of this order. Hence it was the maxim of her reign, that

every great transaction should have the colour of law; and that whenever any extraordinary measure was undertaken, the motives to it were so far from being kept secret, that the queen took especial care the world should be acquainted with them;—to prevent false rumours.

This is an excellent custom and regulation, if true motives are given; but a very insidious one, if false ones: the wisdom of the record depending entirely on the truth; the most lasting of tyrannies being that of unwise laws.

CXXXIX.

WHO CAN PERCEIVE THE CONSEQUENCES OF AN ARGUMENT, BUT NOT OF AN ACTION.

SOME can perceive, at one slight glance, all the deductions and consequences of an argument; and yet not the deductions and consequences of a circumstance:—being, as it were, more acquainted with Aristotle's categories than with Aristotle's rhetoric.

We may apply this to Pope Sixtus IV.; for when he excommunicated the magistrates of Florence, who had hung an archbishop and imprisoned a cardinal, at whose instance the former had engaged in a conspiracy against the family of Medici, he neutralized his anathema by including in it the clergy of the Florentine States;—persons who had nothing whatever to do in the transaction. The clergy, in return, published an anathema against the Pope; and, associating themselves more intimately with the citizens, the effect and consequences.

were far more afflicting and important to the Pope than his holiness had, in any way, supposed possible.

CXL.

WHO GIVE WISE REASONS FOR UNWISE ACTIONS.

THESE seem to consider the former as necessary to the latter, as the wing of the fly is to the web of the spider. Napoleon's reasons for refusing to make peace at Chatillon were legitimate and honourable, as far as regarded France; but unwise for himself. These reasons are stated by Caulincourt, Duke of Vicenza. He insisted upon retaining Belgium, Ostend, and Antwerp; declaring that those provinces were not more than equivalent to what Russia, Prussia, and Austria had acquired by the dismemberment of Poland only.

Napoleon seems to have had no conception of the art of bending to the circumstances of to-day, to recover the loss on the morrow.

CXLI.

WISE MEN WHO GIVE UNWISE COUNSEL.

HUME's argument, in justification of the policy of Henry I., more befits a man of the world than a philosopher, an historian, or a statesman. 'When violence and usurpation are once begun, necessity *obliges* a prince to continue in the same criminal course, and engages him in measures, which his better judgment and sounder principles would otherwise have induced him to reject with warmth and indignation.'

This passage is condemned by the example of the most politic of usurpers—Augustus. Indeed, nothing tends to the consolidation of an usurpation so effectually as a line of conduct as far remote from this, as heaven is from earth.

Wise men are, sometimes, guarded and admonished by their enemies. Machiavelli knew what he meant well, by advice similar to that of Hume; but Hume seems to have been in earnest: he even reminds us of a passage in one of Demosthenes' Orations:—'It would be just to restore the democratical government in Rhodes; but even were it not just, still, observing what other states do, I think it would be advisable for its expediency. If all, indeed, would be just, then it would be shameful for the Athenians to be otherwise. But when all others are providing themselves with means to injure, for us alone to abide by justice, and scruple to use advantages offered, I consider not as uprightness but weakness; and, in fact, I see all states regulating their rights not by the equity of an act, but by their power of accomplishing.'

When we are powerful we may choose our own weapons: when not so, it is certain that we must consult the weapons of the adversary, and guard and fight as necessity dictates. Machiavel, however, says* of the Venetians (at a particular period), that few of them could foresee a danger; few could remedy; and that there were none at all who were qualified to advise.

* Discorsi, iii.c. 11.

CXLII.

LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

It is quite a mistake to suppose, that men of business are unequal to the possession of elegant aspirations. There are not more elegantly-minded men, for instance, in the world than many British statesmen, and many British merchants. Nor was there ever a greater instance of this union than in Lorenzo de' Medici. He was continually absorbed in business, both commercial and political; and yet the obligations of literature and the arts to him (and his family in general *) are scarcely to be told.

The vast wealth of the Medici family was acquired by their carrying on a very lucrative trade in spices with Alexandria; by their leasing almost all the mines of alum in Italy; and by the establishment of commercial banks in most of the trading cities in Europe; by means of which they were enabled to advance large loans, sometimes at great interest, to many powerful sovereigns.

No one ever knew the art of pushing a family better than Lorenzo de' Medici. His son, Piero, succeeded him; Giuliano married into the royal house of France, became Duke of Nemours, and even, at one time, had reason to hope that he might ascend the throne of Naples. Giovanni was nominated Archbishop of Aix,

* For an ample account of these obligations, consult Bianchini de Prato, del Gran Duchi de Toscana, &c. Venice. Fol. 1741.

when only eight years of age ; he became a Cardinal at seventeen ; and subsequently Pope, under the title of Leo X. His daughter, Maddelena, married a Pope's son ; and his grandchild became celebrated under the title of Cardinal Ippolito ; while Guilio, the illegitimate son of his brother Guiliano, became Archbishop of Florence, and subsequently Pope, under the title of Clement VII. Lorenzo's three daughters were mothers to four cardinals.

Lorenzo added strength to sagacity ; jocularly and urbanity to seriousness and contemplation ; penetration to versatility ; and elegance of taste to comprehension of mind. He paved the road for the glory of Michael Angelo ; he was beloved by Politian ; and enjoys celebrity in the pages of Machiavelli and Guicciardini. He was, however, too perpetually awake to opportunity ; and meditated less for his country's permanent interest than for the benefit of himself, his family, and descendants. His memory, therefore, cannot be embalmed so richly as the friends of literature * seem disposed to insist.

Some writers are of opinion that Lorenzo was requested to take upon him the care and administration of the Florentine republic ; others, however, as expressly assert, that his ancestors prepared the road for a subversion of the Florentine liberties ; and that he completed it. The former class of writers give him every excellence ; the

* ' Nous voici enfin à Florence, la patrie du Dante et de Michel Ange ; Florence enfin, où tout respire encore la gloire des Médicis et la protection qu'ils accordoient aux lettres. Je ne saurois vous peindre l'impression que j'ai reçue de tant de beautés réunies.'—*Barthelemy, Voy. en Italie*, p. 25.

latter insist, that his public measures were, at all times, injurious to his country; that his spectacles corrupted them; that he lessened the importance of Florence in the general disposition of affairs in Italy; that he maintained his usurped authority by bloody executions; that he daily and hourly increased the burthen of a detested yoke over a free city; that neither in art, poetry, or philosophy, was he a superior person; and that his sole fame ought to rest on the assistance he afforded to others; who, in return, became the grand supporters of his extraordinary reputation.

Machiavel says of Lorenzo, that he was greatly beloved both by 'God and Fortune*;' but the family, both in its first and second dynasties, have assuredly been overrated. They can never be highly appreciated by constitutional politicians; but they will ever be held in respect and admiration by painters and sculptors, musicians, poets, and men of elegant literature.

CXLIII.

ACTORS AND ADVISERS.

THE deeds of those who act are seen, therefore valued. Those who counsel only,—doing so in the closet, their deeds appear to be only of words; they are, in consequence, known only to a few, and valued only by a few.

'The ram, that batters down the wall,
For the great sway, and rudeness of the poise,
They place before the hand that made the engine.'

Troilus and Cressida.

* Hist. Flor. b. viii.

Sallust and Livy have preserved some few notes in respect to the debates of the Roman senate ; and thence the advice of many is preserved to memory whose deeds were nothing. The American congress, the French chambers, and the British parliament, present fine arenas for the display of advice, which, in consequence of their publication, insure appreciation both of time and of place.

The period will be happy, when men of imagination shall be gifted with power to accomplish what mere men of what is called practice will never be able to perceive till they see that it is done.

CXLIV.

WHO ACT CONTRARY TO THEIR OWN PRECEPTS.

THE Spanish writers speak, in general, more brilliantly of Francis I. than the French. This has been attributed, especially by Varillas, to the wish of endeavouring to convince the French, that as Francis was not able to subdue Spain, no other French monarch need adventure the attempt. Late events, however, have proved, that when a kingdom is divided by faction, a weak enemy is, in effect, not only too subtle but too strong.

The declaration of Francis in regard to protestantism was this :—‘ If I thought the blood in this arm were ‘ tainted with the Lutheran heresy, I would cut it off ; ‘ and I would not even spare my own children, did ‘ I know they entertained sentiments contrary to those

‘ of the Catholic church *.’ In the spirit of this declaration he condemned many to the flames for religious opinions. To soften his asperity, Calvin wrote the celebrated dedication of his *Christian Institutions*: and, as a practical illustration of his own precepts,—condemned Servetus to the stake!

CXLV.

THREE ORDERS OF PERSONS.

THESE orders are:—those who are always prepared; those who never try; and those who love, to intensity, the hurry of business.

1. Of those who are always prepared.—‘ What is the reason,’ inquired Demosthenes, in one of his orations against Philip, ‘ what is the reason, that the festivals, in honour of Minerva and Bacchus, are always celebrated at the appointed times; festivals, that cost more money than is usually expended upon a whole navy; while your expeditions have been all too late? The reason is this. Every thing relating to the former is ascertained by law; and every one of you knows, long before, who is to conduct the several entertainments in each tribe: what he is to receive, when and from whom, and what to perform. But in affairs of war and warlike preparation, there is no order, no regularity, no certainty.’

* See Mosheim, iii. 68. From *Fleur de Remond, Hist. de la Naissance et du Progrès de l’Hérésie.*

2. Who never try.—What said the Lord Chancellor Brougham the other day*? ‘I always think it time enough to say, “I can’t;” when I have tried and failed. Whenever a man says, I can’t, before he has tried, we may safely conclude that he means, I won’t.’

3. Who love the hurry of business.—The Duke of Newcastle was of this order. What says Lord Chesterfield in respect to him?—‘His ruling, or, rather, his only passion, was the agitation, the bustle, and the hurry of business. But he was as dilatory in dispatching it as he was eager to engage in it. He was always in a hurry; never walked, but always ran; insomuch, that I have sometimes told him, that by his fleetness one should rather take him for the courier than the author of the letters.’

CXLVI.

CAIUS GRACCHUS.

CAIUS GRACCHUS may, in some respects, be regarded as a second Numa; yet his name, for the most part, has been lost in the splendour of his brother’s. He was, in fact, the most effective regulator that Rome produced during the whole period of its republic. For he proposed, and caused to be passed, laws relative to the regulation of markets; a more equitable judication; colonization; and division of lands: as well as for making roads and erecting public granaries. His in-

* June 24, 1831.

dustury and celerity, in fact, were the admiration of all but his enemies. He made roads straight, which before had been serpentine; grounded them with hewn stone, or a binding sand; built bridges, made causeways, placed mile-posts, and fixed stones for the use of those old men who travelled without servants, that they might the more easily remount their horses. To him, also, were the Latins indebted for having had extended to them the rights and privileges of Rome.

Cicero gives Caius a high character as an orator. His language was rich and copious; his sentiments judicious and manly; his manner striking and noble. These were the means with which he worked; those were the results for which he laboured.

CXLVII.

CHARACTERS WHICH REMIND US OF CERTAIN PICTORIAL SKETCHES.

SOME remind us of sketches characteristic of Rubens and Rembrandt; the contrasts they exhibit being immediate. Chesterfield affords us an instance in Lord Bolingbroke:—‘His virtues and his vices, his reason and his passions,’ says his Lordship, ‘did not blend themselves by a gradation of tints, but formed a *shining* and *sudden* contrast. Here the darkest; there the most splendid colours; and both rendered more striking from their proximity.’

Men of this kind are very agreeable to know, but not so easy to manage.

CXLVIII.

WITH WHOM IT IS NEVER THE TIME.

WITH some the time never is. 'It is too early;' 'it is too late;' 'there is no necessity;' 'changes are dangerous and pestilent things;' 'never be in a hurry about any thing;' 'wise men are never in haste.'

These are their arguments; these are their weaknesses; these their absurdities. It is never the time; neither in peace, nor in war; in prosperity, nor in adversity; in winter, nor in summer.

Napoleon, in this respect, made a lasting error. Caulincourt solicited full powers to treat with the allies at Chatillon. Napoleon refused. At length Caulincourt departed; and, as he left the town, met Napoleon's secretary with the powers, so often urged for. It was now too late. One day sooner, and he had, probably, died upon the throne of France.

Some men's watches, as Talleyrand said of Marmont, when he negotiated with Prince Schwarzenberg, go a few minutes faster than those of other men;—and on those few minutes frequently hang the glory or the ruin of an empire or a state.

CXLIX.

SKETCHES FROM SHAKSPEARE.

'What! doth my Lord of Suffolk comfort me?
 Came he right now to sing a raven's note,
 Whose dismal tune bereft my vital powers;
 And thinks he, that the chirping of a wren,
 By crying comfort from a hollow breast,
 Can chase away the first conceived sound?
 Hide not thy poison with such sugar'd words.'

Henry VI. Second Part.

MEN in common life have not often an opportunity of acting in this manner. They have neither the policy nor the opportunity. The practice is chiefly reserved for the rich and the refined. Chesterfield, perhaps, was equal to its adoption; and Chatham to a contempt of it.

II.

'I think there's never a man in Christendom
 Can lesser hide his love or hate than he;
 For by his face, straight shall you know his heart.'

Richard III.

Men of this kind should never engage in intrigues, whether in war, in politics, or in illegitimate love. They are dangerous to their associates, compeers, and paramours.

To be known by our countenances, when honest, is a high advantage, when we have to deal with honest men; almost ruin, when we play at hazard with dishonest ones.

III.

————— 'If our virtues
 Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike

As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touched,
 But to fine issues ; and nature never lends
 The smallest scruple of her excellence,
 But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
 Herself the glory of a creditor,
 Both thanks and use.'—*Measure for Measure*.

Certain :—if we have noble qualities, and use them not, as poor we are as misers. Can any one have noble qualities, and yet *disdain* to show them ?

Can man ever be *despised* by noble men ? Will he not, on the other hand, always be regarded by them as fitted for his sphere of action, and as an agent for the fulfilment of specific purposes in the economy of things ?

Can lions disdain lions ? Can eagles disdain eagles ? Can boa-constrictors disdain boa-constrictors ? Can men really be despised by men ?

Little men look at man ; great ones at men. Some take the circle of a village ; some of a town ; some of a city ; some of a province ; some of a kingdom ; and some of the whole earth.

IV.

' This is a slight unmeritable man,
 Meet to be sent on errands ;
 And though we lay these honours on him,
 To ease ourselves of divers slanderous loads,
 He shall but bear them as the ass bears gold ;
 To groan and sweat under the business,
 Or led or driven as we point the way ;
 Then take we down his load, and turn him off
 To graze on commons.'—*Julius Cæsar*.

A person of this kind,—if really of this kind,—almost deserves to be so treated : but vicious men,—espe-

cially if they be courtiers or politicians,—make a practice of this by many of their inferior agents and associates. They would treat all men so, if they dared; that is, if it were their interest. All men, in their hands, being masters, dupes, tools, or martyrs.

CL.

WHO TURN THEIR HORSES' HEADS THE WRONG WAY.

'SHIPS are like my master's beard,' said a Turkish admiral to the Venetian, who had taken him with all his fleet at Lepanto; 'ships are like my master's beard; you may cut it off: but it will grow again. He has cut off from your government all the Morea, which is like a limb; and that you will never recover.'

This may be applied to those, who go the wrong way to work. Some, intending, as it were, to go from London to York, turn their horses' heads towards Canterbury. Napoleon accuses the Count d'Artois of acting after this manner, when he went to Lyons. 'When the count arrived there,' said he to Montholon, 'he threw himself on his knees before the troops, in order to induce them to advance against me. He never put on the cordon of the legion of honour, though he knew that the sight of it would be most likely to excite the minds of the soldiers in his favour: as it was the order so many of them wore on their breasts, and required nothing but bravery to obtain: but he decked himself out with the order of the Holy Ghost, to be eligible for which, you must prove one hundred and fifty years of nobility; an order formed, purposely, to exclude merit; and one which excited indignation in the breasts of the old soldiers.'

To have adopted the cordon of the legion of honour would have excited various hostile associations; to wear the ensigns of the order of the Holy Ghost would have been still more injudicious:—what, then, could the unfortunate Count d'Artois have done? Wear neither!

CLI.

WHO SUCCEED IN PROJECTS DEEMED IMPOSSIBLE.

MANY men succeed in things for which they seem entirely unfit. They outlive dangers, too, to which they appear wholly inadequate. They survive,—

' To mock the expectations of the world ;
To frustrate prophecies ; and to raze out
Rotten opinions.'

They succeed in projects, also, which most men will not esteem possible, till they see them executed;—a remark which gave life to Cardinal de Retz, when about to effect his very remarkable escape from his prison at Nantz.

II.

' Not one regards the method, how he gains,
But fixed his resolution, gain he must.'

Ben Jonson.

It was a favourite opinion of the Abbé de St. Pierre, that no person rises from a station of mediocrity to a splendid fortune by honourable means; and Roscoe justly remarks*, in allusion to the assassination of Alessandro de' Medici, that crime was never once necessary in the whole course of human affairs.

* Vol. ii. p. 420.

CLII.

WHO SINK INTO CONTEMPT AFTER THEY HAVE SUCCEEDED.

No one can have peace while he thirsts for power and pleasure at the same time.

Men often shrink into contempt, when they have attained the full measure of their ambition. When Pulteney, for instance, crept into the House of Lords as an earl, he sunk into almost abject insignificance. The first William Pitt's fall was not so great; but though he, too, obtained an earldom, he had not set his mind exclusively upon it.

Mignet* has a passage in regard to Danton, that awakens many useful reflections:—'He was formidable in his politics, when the question was to arrive at his end; but he became indifferent as soon as it was obtained.'

Men will, sometimes, attempt to increase their glory in an inverse ratio; but what wise man would attempt adding to his stature at the expense of his health? a question that reminds one of a passage in St. Augustine †.

CLIII.

WHO DO NOT ACT UP TO THEIR WISHES WHEN THEY CAN.

The power of some to do what they wish, and who yet do not do what they desire, reminds me of the

* Vol. i. 322.

† 'Idonea verò causa ut magnum esset impetium car esse deberet inquietum? noane in corporibus hominum satius est modicam staturam cum sanitate habere, quam ad molem aliquam giganteam perpetuis afflictionibus pervenire.'

redwing and the penguin. The former is, for the most part, a tuneless bird; but among the northern forests of maple it sings; and its song is in the highest degree delightful. The wings of the latter are of little use but to serve as paddles; and their legs are of as little use for walking. Where is the use of a talent for song, if we will not sing? Where the use of wings or feet, if we will neither walk nor fly?

It has been often objected to Seneca, that he wrote in praise of philosophy, and spoke of the advantages of poverty and the trials of life, when, at the same time, he was living in a palace, possessed of vast wealth, and knew not the want of a dinner any one day of his life. So far from this being an absurdity and a reproach, as some have interpreted, it is otherwise. It carries with it, indeed, a transcendent moral. For does it not teach us, that, so far from all this wealth contributing to Seneca's happiness, it added so little to it, that his imagination was always painting to his judgment, that a condition, the very reverse of his own, must be the happier of the two?

That Seneca did not give away all that he possessed, and become a poor man, is no more a proof of his not believing what he said, than it is an argument against a lover of fine climates, delicious fruits, and poetical associations, that he does not quit his villa on the banks of the Thames, and betake himself to the feet of the Pyrenees, the shores of Languedoc, the neighbourhood of Naples, or one of the delightful islands of the Grecian Archipelago. There are a thousand reasons why a man, having the power, does not adopt that

mode of life, which, in imagination, is the most agreeable to his wishes.

CLIV.

WHO RESIGN THE WORLD.

Quanto t' invidio, O mio fedele e caro,' &c.

' How much, dear friend, I envy thee,
That quiet life, from every turmoil free,
Which my sad fate hath still denied to me.'

Giov. Brevio.; Roscoe.

SOME relinquish all hopes and claims upon the world, on the principle, that it is better to do so than contend for them at the expense of their repose. Some quit the scene because they feel they are not fit for it; most men,—however wearied with toil,—cannot relinquish it; unconscious that happiness depends on the harmony, which subsists between our dispositions and the circumstances in which we have been placed by fortune; and, therefore, that those are the happiest men, whether savages, peasants, monarchs, or philosophers, whose enjoyments are commensurate with their capacities for enjoyment. For my own part, a small cottage, situated on the sea-shore, covered with vines, with a garden, an orchard, and a few fields, with my books, my family, and my friends, and I should fancy myself, like the Italian poet, enjoying the happiness of a superior sphere:—

' Pace tranquilla, senza alcuno affanno,
Simile a quella ch' è nel cielo eterna,
Move dal loro innamorato riso.'

Whether an active life, or a contemplative one, is the more excellent was an almost perpetual subject for ancient reasoners. Surely, it depends on the man ; and not only on the man, but on the situation and condition to which it may be likely for him to be called.

CLV.

WHO GIVE IMPULSES.

SOME persons,—as Duclos and Scheffer said of Mons. de Cereste,—have all the requisite qualifications to render them superior persons, without possessing one of them in a superior degree ; the quantity of the whole making up the deficiency in the separate weights.

Some appear born to remove anomalies, to supply deficiencies, to adapt parts to the whole, and the whole to the parts. Confident of results, they await issues in repose ; even though difficulties should start up like mountains under their feet.

————— ‘ *Crescit labor ; ardua supra*

Sese aperit fessis, at nascitur altera moles.’

Silius Italicus, iii., 529.

There have lived some few illustrious men, whose eminence has contributed to retard,—and very materially so,—the progress of science. We may instance Aristotle.

What Aristotle advanced, no one, for many centuries, presumed to doubt ; and few have, even now, the courage to argue against anything,—even the assured errors,—of the illustrious Newton. Few observers, therefore, dare to argue against his theory of the tides.

Warton makes a sensible remark* :—‘ Interruptions
‘ in the periods of learning may be sometimes favour-
‘ able to the arts and sciences, by breaking the progress
‘ of authority, and dethroning the usurpers over human
‘ reason.’

Few eminent men in England have been able to give impulses to the age, in which they have respectively lived. Their influence,—unless they have coincided with an impulse already given,—has been reserved to a succeeding time. To succeed in our day, indeed, we must be content to float on the swell of the tide.

To have a knowledge of the real value of things, and of the genius of the age we live in, is, according to Rochefoucault, the height of ability ; but who can be ignorant, that the most exalted of intellectual natures are seldom dominant in their own time ? and who, also, knows not that, in national casualties, a circumstance, so small as scarcely to be noticed, sometimes gives an impulse and a direction to the whole course of human affairs ?

CLVI.

WHERE DELUSIONS ARE USEFUL.

It cannot be denied that delusions are, sometimes, of great use for temporary purposes ; and a remarkable instance has occurred, of late years, to confirm the truth of this assertion ; viz., the establishment of the sinking fund. Thousands were deluded by this cheat, both at

* Notes to the Dunciad, b. iii., 108.



home and abroad ; but no persons of enlarged political experience gave into it, even for a moment, except out of respect to the consequences it was sure to produce : —the preservation, and even the elevation, of the public credit.

CLVII.

ON THE EQUALITY OF EVENT TO THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH.

THAT storm is more fatal, which prevents a ship from getting into port, than that which prevents it from sailing.

‘ Whate’er of virtue, or of power,
Or good or great, we vainly call,
Each moment eager to devour,
One vast Charybdis swallows all.’

Thus sings Simonides ; and Solomon asserts, that wisdom is better than folly, yet that a ‘ like event hap-
peneth to both.’ Again—‘ God maketh his sun to
shine on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on
the just and the unjust.’ Milton, too, in *Samson Agonistes* :—

‘ Just and unjust alike seem miserable ;
For oft alike both come to evil end.’

In Hungary they have a precept,—‘ Whether a man
moves fast or slow, no one is master of his own des-
tiny.’ Some from high stations sink into obscurity ;
and others rise from the ashes, as it were, like a rocket,
burst into splendour, and then drop into darkness. Livia
lived all her life honoured by the affection of one of the

most successful of bad men ; and the punishment of *Messalina* proved the source of numberless crimes and a long train of public calamity. Henry IV. died by assassination as well as the brother of *Timoleon* ; and upon the sword of Louis XIV., Charles XII., and *Napoleon*, victory sat for many a year ;

————— ‘ And smooth success
Bestrew’d their feet.’—*Ant. and Cleop.*, i., c. 3.

Even the fallen angels are represented as conscious of this disproportion between reward and desert ; and, like many of the worst of men, their successors, argued the question in favour of their worst endeavours :—

————— ‘ Others, more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing,
With notes angelical to many a harp,
Their own heroic deeds and hapless fall,
By doom of battle ; and complain that Fate
Free virtue should intral to force and chance.’

Moses himself was not permitted to enter Palestine. He only saw it from a visionary distance : and *Solon*, who is supposed (erroneously,) to have attributed success in general to superior wisdom, has left the following sentiment :—

‘ The wise man’s projects oft are seen to fall,
While the devices of the fool succeed.’

Ripheus, the best of the Trojans, perished with the rest. ‘ We thought it hard,’ says *Æneas* ;’ but ‘ *Diis* ‘alter visum*.’ ‘ How could you lose an empire, which ‘ your father knew how to keep ?’ said Philip of Mace-

* *Æneid.* ii, 423.

don, on receiving Dionysius of Syracuse at his court. 'Because my father was more fortunate than I am,' answered the tyrant. 'I inherited his power, but not his fortune.' How sings Bacchylides?—

'Virtue, placed on high, doth shine
With a glory all divine:
Riches oft alike are shower'd
On the hero and the coward.'

There is no accounting for a thousand things!

CLVIII.

THE HOUSE OF SAVOY.

THE kings of Sardinia have been eminent in this; viz. that they have preserved themselves in periods of great danger and difficulty; and been more expert in availing themselves of every wind, than any other sovereigns recorded in modern history; thereby forming a striking contrast to the Stuarts of England, and the Bourbons of France and Spain.

Satan. 'Get riches first; get wealth; and treasure keep;
Not difficult, if thou hearken unto me.
Riches are mine; fortune is in my hand;
They, whom I favour, thrive in wealth amain;
While virtue, valour, wisdom, sit in want.

Messiah. Yet wealth, without these three, is impotent;
To gain dominion, or to keep it, gain'd.'

Par. Regained.

Happy had it been for the Stuarts and the Bourbons, had they discovered, in proper time, that their people's interests and theirs were identical; and that their oppressors were equally their foes.

The house of Savoy has been notorious for selling

itself. Emanuel Philibert, Charles Emanuel I., and Victor Amadeus, sold themselves to the highest bidders; and thus increased their strength by little and little. They desired the Milanese states, wherewith to consolidate their possession of Savoy and Piedmont. 'We must obtain these,' Victor Amadeus was accustomed to say, 'province by province; as we eat the leaves of an artichoke.'

CLIX.

WHO NEGLECT TILL THEY GIVE OVER.

To neglect, till we give over, is a very common practice in small affairs, and sometimes even in important ones. In ninety cases out of an hundred it is very prejudicial; fortunate in the remaining ten. 'Mallet,' said Johnson, 'never wrote a line of his projected Life of the Duke of Marlborough. He groped for materials, and thought of it till he had exhausted his mind. Thus it sometimes happens, that men entangle themselves in their own schemes.' The fact was, Mallet went on neglecting, from time to time, till he felt all inclination to proceed entirely subside. Neglect frequently engenders repugnance. Merchants, for instance, sometimes neglect their accounts, till they hate them; and this is one of the numerous causes of bankruptcy.

CLX.

WHO KNOW HOW TO ESCAPE.

THE knowing when to yield is one of the best species of knowledge to men in power. Most revolutions have

been the consequence of ignorance in this respect. ‘Resolution and steadiness,’ said Lord Lyttleton, on the repeal of the Jew Bill, 1753, ‘are excellent qualities; but it is the application of them upon which their value depends. A wise government, Mr. Speaker, will know where to yield, as well as where to resist; and there is no surer mark of littleness of mind in an administration, than *obstinacy in trifles.*’

Happy had it been for many ministers and chiefs, had they known and felt the value and wisdom of this plain, simple precept.

CLXI.

WHO ARE PLIABLE TO CIRCUMSTANCES.

——— ‘Have a care! Don’t seem
Surprised at any thing: give way in all:
Do as he bids, and say but little.’

Terence; Self-Tormentor; Colman.

AGREEABLE manners may be compared to the sweet-scented woodroffe, which gives such a grateful flavour to wine. Natural politeness is, indeed, delightful; but artificial politeness is, for the most part, the result of affectation, frivolity of disposition, and duplicity of character.

The pliability of Lord Holderness extended farther. Lord Melcombe* pressed Lord Bute to take the secretary’s office, and provide otherwise for Lord Holderness. ‘If that is the only difficulty,’ said his Lordship, after a pause, ‘it can be easily removed. For Lord Holderness is ready, at my desire, to quarrel with his fel-

* Diary, p. 416.

‘ low ministers, go to the king, and throw up in seeming anger. Then I can come in without appearing to displace any one.’

Were all men stubborn alike, how could a minister carry on a government?

Gustavus of Sweden returned the collar of the Black Eagle to the King of Prussia, because the order had been conferred on Napoleon, then First Consul of France. His Majesty did not consider, that, in showing an honourable indignation against the murderer of D’Enghein, he lost a friend, valuable both to himself and his country. What was noble in Louis XVIII., who, at the same time, returned the order of the Golden Fleece, was folly in him. Times, seasons, persons, circumstances, and situations, must always be considered amply, and weighed in an even balance; especially when we are engaged with an enemy too strong for us.

CLXII.

WHO KNOW WHEN TO SUBMIT.

To know the tempers of men is useful in all stations; but in no trade more essentially than in that of politics.

In respect to Lord Holland and Sir Robert Walpole; Chesterfield says of the latter, that he was the best parliament man, and the most able manager of parliament, that ever lived. ‘ An artful, rather than an eloquent speaker; he saw, as by *intuition*, the disposition of the house, and pressed or receded accordingly.’

Lord Holland was of a different cast, and yet commanded a corresponding result. Inelegant, disagreeable, and ungrateful, he was yet ‘ skilful in discerning

‘ the temper of the house, and knowing when and how
‘ to press or to yield.’

Had the Duke of Wellington known how and when to submit, he had never incurred disgrace for having yielded to the Catholic demand at one time, and the not yielding to that for reform at another. It is idle to refuse that at the first, which *must* be given in the end.

CLXIII.

WHO KNOW WHEN TO STOP.

CÆSAR did not know ; Cromwell did. Napoleon did not. Garrick and Siddons, also, knew when to stop ; and on this knowledge Apelles is said to have founded his superiority.

CLXIV.

WHO ESCAPE WHAT THEY WISH.

CLAUDE LORRAINE narrowly escaped being a mason ; and Salvator Rosa something equally beneath the genius which has immortalized him. Had the learned Prideaux, too, succeeded in his wish to be parish-clerk of Ugborow, he had never been recommended by a *congé d'élire* to the bishopric of Worcester.

It is fortunate, that many of our wishes bear an analogy with snow, which,

—————‘ falling on a river,
A moment white, then gone for ever.’

Idleness engenders a thousand wishes, and mars as many. Thus the wizard in Thomson’s Castle of Indolence :—

Unceasing at the massy gate,
 Beneath a spacious palm, the wicked wight
 Was placed, and to his lute of cruel fate,
 And labour harsh, complain'd ;—lamenting man's estate.'

Young justly says, that to be always wishing is 'the constant hectic of a fool;' and here it may be, also, observed, that the most cruel gift, which fortune can bestow, is, for the most part, that which we most ardently desire.

CLXV.

WHO CANNOT BE CALCULATED UPON TILL THEY HAVE
 FINISHED THEIR SPEECHES.

THERE is a race of persons, of whose intentions we can never judge till they come to the conclusion of all they have to say. This class was peculiarly characteristic of a small party in the British House of Commons during the whole of the American war, and of them Mr Burke has left the following memento :—' It is astonishing,' says he, ' how much this uncertainty, as to which side they would vote, called the attention of all parties on such men. All eyes were fixed upon them ; each party gazed and looked alternately for their votes almost to the end of their speeches. While the house hung in this uncertainty, now the "hear him" rose from one side, now they rebellowed from the other ; and that party, to whom they fell at length, from their tremulous and dancing balance, always received them in a tempest of applause.'

In later times, this species of oratory was characteristic of many, belonging to the party of Mr. Wilber-

force. At home, with the exclusion of their leader, whose exertions in respect to the slave trade can never be forgotten, they

‘Sate at the social fire, and, happy, heard
Th’ excluded tempest loudly rave along*.’

They knew not the consequences of their own decisions!

CLXVI.

WHO ARE ALWAYS IN A BUSTLE.

MY neighbour, ———, is always in a bustle, and so is his wife. They appear always to be looking for something they have lost.

George II. was of this order. But—

————— ‘Stillest streams
Oft water finest meadows, and the bird,
That flutters least, is longest on the wing.’

Bustler, however, as he is, ——— made a shrewd observation the other day:—‘A man may have a multitude of little evils, sir, and not know how in the world to get rid of them: a great one comes; he rouses himself—all at once—to get rid of that; and, in so doing, the weight of the whole slips off his shoulders.’

CLXVII.

WHO MAKE A FUSS ABOUT NOTHING.

THE following sketch is ample for the subject: for all will recognize the truth of the portraiture in some

* Thomson; Autumn, l. 143.

of their acquaintances. A gentleman had sent Johnson a letter. 'This letter,' said the lexicographer, 'had been written to him by nobody; no matter what about; but he wanted to have it back, and expressed a mighty value for it; he hoped it was to be met with again; he would not lose it for a thousand pounds. I laid my hand upon it soon afterwards, and gave it him. Oh, then he did not know that it signified anything. So, you see, when the letter was lost, it was worth a thousand pounds; and when it was found, it was not worth a farthing.' How many men there are, with whom we can be *exceedingly* angry one moment, and yet smile at the next!

Seneca describes a sort of persons, who are men of business only in their faces; wandering up and down, like ants, eager and empty; indulging a humour, which may be expressed by the term 'restless laziness.' I have known many such. Happy are those

' Who seldom vary feature, hue, or muscle;
And can be very busy without bustle.'

Socrates gained his points of conviction by asking questions, apparently foreign, but which brought the points into the centre of the circle. Some men, however, while attempting this, resemble the jay, a bird which, fluttering with powerless wings, makes but little progress or dispatch. It is all 'Much ado about nothing.'

Even philosophers are, occasionally, guilty of this; and Tycho Brahe was an example; for, judging from appearances in preference to physical and mechanical considerations, to save the earth the trouble, as it were,

of turning upon its axis once in twenty-four hours, he insisted that the sun and planets—nay, the whole universe—turned round the earth! This was, at all times, a doubtful hypothesis; but since we have acquired some insight into the structure of the sidereal system, it becomes a subject almost for our ridicule: the earth being, to the universe, merely as a nut, a pea, or a pin's head.

CLXVIII.

WHO RECEIVE JUSTICE AS A FAVOUR; WHO RECEIVE
FAVOURS AS RIGHTS.

RAIN becomes hail from the circumstance of its meeting, in its descent, a cold air, which freezes it. Hailstones are rather less than the drops of rain; and they remind one of

'I am all ice; thy kindness freezes me.'

Some suffer so much from the injustice of their fellow men, that for any one to abstain from insulting them, when they offer a civility, is regarded by them as an act of kindness. Others, however, grant them what favour we will, take it not as a favour; but as an act of justice due to their desert!

CLXIX.

THREE ORDERS OF PERSONS.

JOHNSON characterized three orders of persons, in General Oglethorpe, Lord Elibank, and Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury. Oglethorpe never completed what he had to say; Elibank had nothing conclusive in his talk; and Burnet took no pains to be right. 'Burnet,'

said he, ' was like a man who resolves to regulate his ' time by a certain watch ; but will not inquire whether ' or not the watch is correct.' This is characteristic, not of a man only, but of a great multitude.

CLXX.

MEDIOCRITY.

GREAT talents are not requisite for the affairs of life ; and genius, in certain spheres and situations, is an incumbrance rather than a help. Grotius* attributed the stability of the Venetian oligarchy to their dulness and mediocrity ; and Montesquieu says†, that if a mediocrity be established by commerce, a state may last for many ages ; but that a grandeur of power, established by the same means, must be of a comparatively short duration ; because it attracts the eyes of other states, and shows the road to similar results.

CLXXI.

HOW SOME PERSONS ARE SWAYED.

SOME are governed in their habits and judgments by custom ; some by education and association ; some by the influence of novelty ; some by the power of fashion ; some by emulation ; some by the love of opposition ; some by a desire of singularity ; and all by self-love and prejudice of one kind or another. As to prejudices, —they are like well-cemented Roman citadels, which have been, in all ages, more difficult to destroy than they had been to erect.

* Polit. Maxims, c. iv., 16.

† Spirit of Laws.

CLXXII.

WHO GAIN POPULARITY BY COURTESY.

MONTESQUIEU gives the origin of politeness:—‘ It arises,’ says he, ‘ from a desire of distinguishing ourselves. It is pride that renders us polite:—we feel a pleasing vanity in being remarked for a behaviour that shows, in some measure, we are not meanly born; and that we have not been bred up with those who, in all ages, have been considered as the dregs of the people.’

Studied politeness is the art of accommodating ourselves to men’s humours;—an art that succeeds wonderfully nine times out of ten; but in the tenth a silent contempt is engendered, which, without his perception, ruins a man by degrees.

Ætius, in regard to the barbarians of the west, obtained great influence by consulting their prejudices, and soothing their passions. Such, too, was the policy of Valerius; ‘ a general,’ says Livy, ‘ than whom no one was more familiar with soldiers.’ He entered into all their services, whether of swiftness or of strength; lost as graciously and as good-humouredly as he won; scorned to enter the lists with no one; nor was he less regardful of other men’s liberties than he was of his own dignity.

The cheapest and most effective mode of gaining popularity is the adoption of a courteous manner: not, however, so much so in monarchies as in republics. Plutarch confesses, that Cato the Censor had but little

weight in the administration; and this principally owing to the hauteur and unpopularity of his manners.

Polished courtesy is like a magnet, doubly pointed. Most great men have been distinguished by it. Let us enumerate a few:—Cyrus, Alexander, Scipio, Cæsar, Titus, Marcus Aurelius, Theodosius, Constantine, Julian, Alfred, and Henry V. The last was so great an adept in conciliating enemies, and in attracting friends, that, when exercising the functions of king of France, the French are said to have almost forgot they were ruled by an enemy.

The arts of popularity are well described by Richard the Second, in reference to Henry the Fifth's father, when he made his entry into London; and the advantage of courteous manners in a republic were wisely laid down by Giovanni de' Medici to his two sons, a few hours before he died. Consult Shakspeare in the first instance*, and Machiavelli in the second †.

One of the first fortunes for a man in authority is a mild and dignified suavity of manner. There is nothing to compare with it in the art of winning the suffrages of men. Even benefits are inferior to it in effect: for benefits—sometimes!—engender dislike; kindness of manner never does.

* Richard II.

† Hist. Flor. b. v.

CLXXIII.

WHOSE FIRST THOUGHTS ARE BEST.

COLLATED and compared the present editions of Thomson's Seasons, with the originals; marking, with an agreeable solicitude, those passages in which the present editions are inferior to the first, and those in which they are superior.

Johnson says the first edition is better than the later ones. I cannot say, however, that I felt any justice in this remark; the later editions being, in my estimation, greatly superior to the first.

With some, second thoughts are always best; with others, no thoughts are equal to the first.

CLXXIV.

WHO PRACTISE DELAYS TO GAIN TIME.

OF this M. de Bordeaux accused Cromwell. 'Al- though in all his negotiations,' said he, in a letter to Cardinal Mazarin*, 'his chiefest object be not to do, or conclude any business; yet he offers an apparent pro- bity by uniting demands in such a manner, that one cannot separate or finish any one of the agitated ques- tions, but with the resolution of them all, to practise the delays, and to reserve by such remises some fa- vourable conjunctures of time.'

In the common transactions of life, to gain time even

* Thurloe's State Papers, vol. iv. fol. 3.

for apparently small things is, occasionally, of great moment; but men often sacrifice too much in gaining this time; dreading too largely the probable event; and thereby letting—

‘Enterprizes of great pith and moment
Turn aside, and lose the name of action.’

To gain time in sorrow is of the first importance. We ought, therefore, to gain it with all industry; sometimes by being present at the representation of a drama; sometimes by reading a work of history, travel, or romance; sometimes by a walk in the streets or fields; sometimes—any how!

CLXXV.

THREE ILLUSTRATIVE INSTANCES OF PROMOTION.

THE first I shall adduce, will be illustrative of a military despotism; the second of a civil despotism; the third of a contest for monarchical power.

The Duke of Abrantes being at Toulon, Buonaparte, in the heat of the battle against the English, who had attacked the town, inquired for a corporal who could write. One instantly stepped forward and wrote a dispatch. At the moment of finishing, a ball fell, and scattered some earth on the paper. ‘Well,’ exclaimed the corporal, ‘I shall have no need of sand.’ This striking remark recommended him to Buonaparte, who, subsequently, made him governor-general of Illyria and Duke of Abrantes.

The Marquis de Varenne derived his title in a manner somewhat different. He was cook to the

Princess Catherine of France; and his chief excellence consisted in larding meat and dressing poulets. He became, afterwards, pimp to Henry IV., then councillor of state, and lastly, comptroller-general of the Post-office.

The origin of the dukedom of Leeds is very remarkable. An apprentice to a rich merchant, Sir William Hewitt, having saved the life of his master's daughter, when a child, by plunging into the Thames, and bringing her safe to land, she having fallen out of the window of a house standing on London Bridge, the master gave him this daughter in marriage. Osborne was afterwards elected sheriff, became lord mayor, and was knighted. One of his successors was made a baronet; and his great-grandson having materially assisted in the restoration of Charles II., was not only made treasurer of the navy and a privy councillor; but, subsequently, lord high-treasurer, and Earl of Danby. Having assisted in recovering the Stuarts, and been rewarded amply for that service, he was equally active in effecting their disgrace; the revolution being so much indebted to him, that, in 1689, the Prince of Orange created him Marquis of Carmarthen; and in 1694, Duke of Leeds.

CLXXVI.

WHO WORSHIP SUCCESS AS A GOD.

SUCCESS and resolution seem to be, alternately, father and son, mother and daughter. Some rely upon their fortune, as they are pleased to call it. 'But when a

‘ town is besieged,’ says a celebrated French historian, ‘ by a superior army, the works properly conducted, ‘ and season favourable ; one may guess, pretty nearly, ‘ in what time it will be taken, though the defence be ‘ ever so vigorous.’

The Romans adored success as a god, and erected to him a temple. The Imperators kept a statue of him even in their cabinets. Cicero asserts, that Fortune, not Wisdom, governs human affairs ; and Terence declares, that Chance gives men many things they scarcely dared to hope for.

The Romans have been generally styled successful, because they neglected nothing that could add to their grandeur, magnificence, and power. They had violent passions and bad hearts. If we speak of their whole period of empire, they had a poverty of virtue ; and many of their good qualities merely resembled those of the juniper, cinchona, and cinnamon, the virtues of which do not reside in the wood, but in the bark. All outside !

They had usefulness, strength, and beauty,—the principal characteristics of an edifice ; but those qualities were so feebly combined, that their usefulness at length degenerated into injury ; their strength into weakness ; their beauty into deformity. No people effected more than the Romans, if we except the British ; yet no people ever made greater errors, submitted to a more galling domestic tyranny, committed greater crimes, or consented to bear the responsibility of greater atrocities.

CLXXVII.

WHO KNOW NOT THE EXTENT OF THEIR SUCCESS.

THE plans of Columbus were executed with great vigour, great daring, and great success. But he died in ignorance, that he had discovered islands contiguous to a continent, separated by a vast ocean from the world he had left, and the one he thought he had visited; surpassing both in the grandeur and beauty of its vegetable productions; and peopled with nations, whose languages, customs, and manners were wholly unknown to the inhabitants of every other hemisphere. In this he stands aloof and alone from every other man.

‘In one respect,’ said Sir John Sinclair to Mongolfier*, ‘you are more fortunate than Columbus. Vous avez decouvert Columbia, et elle ne pas nommé l’Amerique. You have all the direct merit of the discovery, though others may have indirectly discovered it.’ And this reminds us of what Sir John says in regard to Lord North. ‘He was so tormented with the difficulty arising from the American war, that he often lamented the success with which Columbus had accomplished his voyage to America; contending that Europe would have gone on much better without it†.’

* The first to ascend in a balloon.

† Corresp. i. 74; ii. 86.

CLXXVIII.

WHO FANCY THE JUST CAN NEVER SUCCEED.

DESPAIR never plots ; it always acts from sudden impulse.

It is hope which induces us to form plans ; hence it arises that perpetual HOPE is almost fortune enough for any one. Pre-eminently unfortunate is it, when a bad man loses all hope of what may be obtained by honesty, industry, and frugality ; since he is but too apt to adopt the language of Satan :—

‘ So farewell Hope ; and with Hope, farewell Fear.
Farewell Remorse :—all good to me is lost ;
Evil ! be thou my good !’

Men of the world, and indeed men of almost every description, are continually whispering, or thundering in the ears of those, who talk of ‘ The Just,’ in the conduct of human affairs, that they are mere men of speculation. ‘ All this, my dear sir,’ they exclaim, ‘ is very well to talk of : but it will never do in practice.’

These persons forget, that the just has never yet politically been tried ; whereas the expedient has been tried, a hundred thousand times, with little or no success. And here I am reminded of what Cardinal de Retz says* of Emeri, superintendent of finances :—‘ I heard him say ‘ these words, and at a meeting of the council. Honesty ‘ is only fit for merchants. Those masters of requests, ‘ who allege honesty as a reason in affairs relating to ‘ the king, ought to be punished.’

* Mem. v. i. 117.

If a man were to arise among us, born, as it were, like Pericles, with great political genius, and speaking like a philosopher, he would excite so much attention, that it is probable he might be permitted to act like one. We have, Heaven knows, a multitude of orators; but not one, who appears to have heard even of the name of philosophy. Philosophy, from a man of letters, might be ridiculed in every drawing-room, parlour, coffee-house, tavern, and pot-house, in the country; but philosophy, from the lips of a minister, would be admired from the Thames to the Ganges, and thence to the Nile, the Amazon, and Mississippi. All the world laughed at any thing like common sense in philosophy, till Addison brought her from the schools, and Grotius turned its inquiries from abstruse speculations to the business and affairs of life. Let no one, therefore, despair of its effects in political transactions. A transcendent period is approaching; but it is even now at a distance, and scarcely to be measured by human intellects. It is wise, therefore, to say no more at present. It is easy to laugh, when we have nothing wherewith to confute.

CLXXIX.

WHO EXERCISE CUNNING IN PROPOSING ACCUSATIONS.

‘ These close-pleach’d walks and bows have been
The deadly marksman’s lurking screen.’

THERE is a cunning common among those, who seek to climb high precipices by rotten ropes. La Harpe alludes to it, though I forget to whom and on what occasion he applies the remark. It is his:—to sup-

pose accusations, which were never preferred, that honest men may be induced to believe, that there never were any foundations for those, which truth warrants.

Napoleon adopted this policy often. Madame de Stael says*, also, that he took care to have his projects exaggerated, in order that, when his real plans fully developed themselves, they might be softened of their magnitude by the apprehension previously excited. In spite of all this, what was he destined at last to find? As the reindeer, which is safe from the speed, fury, and hunger of the wolf, when going up-hill, falls a ready prey to him in going down; thus did Napoleon!

‘ He, wondering, saw the bright enchantment bend,
Delightful, o’er the radiant fields, and ran
To catch the falling glory; but, amazed,
Beheld th’ amusing arch before him fly,
Then vanish quite away †.’

It is much more easy to conquer by the sword, than to preserve by stratagem, or even by wisdom, what the sword has acquired.

CLXXX.

WHOSE CASTLES ARE SUPPORTED BY VICES.

THE magnificence of most castles arises less out of their architecture, than the sublimity of the points on which they are situated, or the accompaniments with which time has adorned them. We may apply this with some felicity to ancient families; antiquity and

* Ten Years’ Exile, 30.

† Thomson; Spring, 211.

nobility, like ivy, acting the office of casting friendly veils over multitudes of defects.

When we gaze on the great scene of human affairs, and meditate on the vast web of combination, with which all things, even the smallest, are invested, all the gorgeous plausibilities of rank and station vanish away.

How much is this feeling increased, when we observe castles supported by unworthy actions, or by pensions, illegitimately acquired!

Policy is a principle, cold, passionless, and selfish. Who would desire to have his name associated with that of Sir Pertinax Macsycophant; or even with that of Doddington, Lord Melcombe?

A knowledge of the world is, assuredly, to be prized, if not bought at too great an expense; but that too much may be paid for it requires neither a Socrates nor a Seneca, a Fenelon nor a Tillotson, to illustrate by authority; nor an Euclid, a Napier, or a La Place, to confirm by demonstration.

CLXXXI.

WHO ARE TRIED ALMOST BEYOND THEIR STRENGTH.

THE undeservedly-oppressed have few comforters but their own consciences. But? If a man had but two such comforters, he would be,—let his adversities be as heavy as Olympus,—two thousand miles beyond all pity.

To be tried in calamity is no great subject for regret, as long as we are not tried beyond our strength. When we cannot command circumstances, therefore, let cir-

cumstances command us ; and let us, also, remember, that Miltiades had lost his trophy, ' had he missed an enemy in the fields of Marathon.'

Men, however,—it cannot, unfortunately, be denied, —are sometimes tried so much, that a small event or provocation will go nigh totally to upset, not only their tempers and their philosophy, but even reason itself; as one drop in a cup, already full, will cause it to overflow; and as it is, as they say in Arabia, the last hair ' that breaks the camel's back.' Men, thus tried, should remember the speech of Peter the Great, when, in the battle of Narva, he had lost half his army and all his artillery:—' I expected to be beaten,' said he, in the language of Agis of Sparta; ' and I may be beaten again. But, in time, the Swedes will teach us to beat themselves.'

Contemplate Titian's picture of Prometheus, too; and exclaim in the language of Virgil:—

' Durate et vosmet, rebus servate secundis.'

How many important lessons may we glean from Virgil!

CLXXXII.

MEN OF CREDIT;—MEN OF CHARACTER.

PLACE us in the midst of a hundred and fifty men and fifty women; forty women will pay to the last shilling, but not more than thirty men will pay to the last guinea. Of the rest, some would be so entirely heartless as creditors, that if a debtor were to divide his heart into shares, and divide it amongst them, they would not be content.

How many thousands are there, who not only esteem want of money a want of merit, but a crime! Yet credit and character are very different. Credit depends upon the purse, or the presumed purse; character upon the morals, or the presumed morals. Hence it is evident, that a bad man may often have much better credit than a much better man. Men will trust the former (not their assertions); yet will not trust the latter (except in their assertions). The latter, not because they will not pay, but because they fear they cannot. In a worldly sense, then, it is better to have credit than character; but in a moral one, character is ten thousand degrees beyond credit; since the one has merely money for its basis; whereas the other has conduct, a clear conscience, and, in some cases, the unsullied reputation of a pure mind.

Character is, frequently, a very unequal criterion to judge by; for character depends on a thousand circumstances; and on nothing more than on the neighbourhood in which a person may live: some neighbourhoods being no other than dens, as it were, of scandal and malignity. Many good men, therefore, have bad characters; many bad men good ones.

CLXXXIII.

WHO HAVE POWER TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF UNFAVOURABLE CIRCUMSTANCES.

SOME persons have a wonderful talent in taking advantage of unfortunate circumstances. Cæsar possessed it to such a degree, that, whenever an accident occurred,

he managed it so, that, in the end, it became an advantage. When Fortune turned, he turned too; following her whithersoever she led.

————— ‘*Superat quoniam Fortuna, sequamur ;
Quoque vocat, vertamus iter.*’—*Æn.*, v., 22.

William the Norman had this faculty also. When he landed in England he stumbled and fell. This was a bad omen. How did he convert it? By an exclamation;—‘ Thus, O Earth, do I embrace thee !’

With a large army and full coffers, what sovereign is there, who may not make good treaties, or infringe bad ones? Some, however, without these, do both; caring to have success only to justify their arrogance and presumption:—

‘ With ready view the transient gain they seize ;
Swift as the motion of the rapid breeze ;
Pursue th’ uncertain mark with swift address,
And catch the fleeting moment of success.’

The Florentines were, at one time, peculiarly remarkable for this species of management; insomuch, that Pope Boniface VIII. called them the fifth element of the world. At the grand jubilee, held at Rome in the pontificate of that prelate, twelve of the ambassadors of other states and sovereigns were natives of Florence. They resembled Cæsar, who, as we have said before, in the language of the Duke de Rohan, could, in the moment of accident, instantly provide a remedy, and be, perhaps, the better for the accident.

The Venetians never much excelled as negotiators; but they took advantage of favourable opportunities

with no slight degrees of skill. Hence the Crusades, which were ruinous to every other state, were advantageous to them ; for the crusaders returning tinctured with many Asiatic wants, Venice managed to make itself the mart and the channel through which those new wants were successfully supplied.

CLXXXIV.

WHO ARE DEFECTIVE IN OBVIOUS THINGS.

SOME few persons resemble Lord Granville, and others Lord Poulet. The former is said to have embraced systems like a legislator, but was incompetent to the detail of a common magistrate. The latter lived most of his life at court ; and yet never acquired even the rudiments of knowledge in regard to mankind. Fox was a statesman, yet never read Smith's *Wealth of Nations* ; Pitt was a politician, yet never read the *Life of Cardinal de Retz* ; and Necker was a financier, and yet totally unacquainted not only with logarithms and fluxions, but even with the common rudiments of algebra.

CLXXXV.

CERTAIN STATESMEN COMPARED TO MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

IF we may be allowed occasionally to assimilate, we may, perhaps, be excused for saying, that Sir Robert Walpole might have been compared to a harpsichord ; Lord Chatham to a full fine-toned organ ; the Marquis of Rockingham to a grand pianoforte ; Mr. Fox to a violoncello ; and Mr. Pitt to a harp, destitute of a pedal.

CLXXXVI.

WHO EXPECT WHEAT FROM CHAFF.

SUPERFICIAL advice is pestilential advice: because out of numbers, it is almost sure to gain the greater number of votes. When it is offered only to one, it is not so pestilential; because that one may chance to be a man of sense and experience. ‘If your Holiness will follow my advice,’ said Cardinal de la Voye to Pope John XXII., ‘you would soon mortify these Italians, much more than by conquering them by arms.’ ‘Ah!’ returned the Pope, ‘in what manner?’ ‘It must, at least, be difficult and expensive.’ ‘Not in the least,’ returned the Cardinal; ‘only transfer the pontificate from Rome and Italy to Cahors and Gascoigny. By this you will triumph over your enemies at the expense only of a word.’ ‘Do you not perceive,’ answered his Holiness, ‘that if I take the advice you offer, I and my successors will be mere bishops of Cahors, and the emperors only governors of Gascoigny; while those, who hold the spiritual and temporal precedence at Rome, will ever be the true popes and emperors? Instead of obscuring the glory of Italy, I shall restore it to its former splendour. The name signifies but little: Rome will always be the capital of the world in spite of us.’ They have a saying in Andalusia,—‘When a fool gives you his advice, give him, in return, a box on the ear.’

CLXXXVII.

WHO OBTAIN HONOURS WITH NO GOOD EFFECTS.

THE rivalry between universities is of long standing and of known effect ; and when I once proposed to a celebrated governor-general of India the establishment of a university at the Cape of Good Hope for the benefit of the African, Asiatic, and South-American settlements, he acceded to the wisdom of the plan ; but declared its establishment impossible, on account of the colleges and schools at Hertford, Calcutta, and Madras.

But these jealousies are trivial, when we compare them to the accounts we have received in respect to the divisions, heresies, controversies, jealousies, wars, martyrdoms, and massacres, that arose out of the contests between the Greek patriarchs and the Roman pontiffs, as to which of the two should occupy the highest rank among the nations of the earth. It is impossible, in fact, to read them, and be conscious of the effects they produced, without a feeling of indignation and disdain.

Lord Tenterden made a curious declaration, this evening*, in the House of Lords ; and I suppose he must be correct, since the truth of his assertion was attested by his Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury. ‘ I am one,’ said his Lordship, ‘ who obtained, at a very early period of life, almost all the honours which the university of Oxford could bestow ; and can take upon me to say, after forty-six years subsequent in the world, that no more uncertain, or, indeed, worse crite-

* March 27, 1832.

‘ rion, can be selected for general intellectual expectancy, or fitness for the office of pastor, than the circumstance of the candidate’s having obtained honours at the university.’ And is this indeed the case ?

CLXXXVIII.

WHO EXCEL, AND YET DO NOT ACCOMPLISH ALL THEY
PROPOSE TO THEMSELVES.

SAW two pictures by Tintoretto ; and they are worthy the fame he enjoys ;—the Burial of Christ, and the Presentation in the Temple. The ambition of Tintoret may be read in the inscription over his studio :—
‘ Michael Angelo’s design with the colouring of Tintorian.’

These he never attained ; but when Pietro da Cortona saw his works, he exclaimed :—‘ Did I but live in Venice, not a festival should pass without my resorting to this spot, to feast mine eyes upon such beautiful objects.’

The inscription over his studio was, doubtless, gratifying to Tintoretto’s vanity ; but it injured his reputation by exciting an expectation he ought never to have hoped to gratify. He had this consolation, nevertheless ;—he fancied he had obtained all he desired. Take away the vanity of hope, and who shall rise from his bed ?

CLXXXIX.

WHO FORGET THE MAIN POINTS.

MANY persons are solicitous in respect to all points but the main one. As an instance we may refer to Warburton's opinion of David Mallet :—' He has, in his life ' of Bacon, forgot that Bacon was a philosopher ; and ' if he should write the life of Marlborough, he would, ' probably, forget he was a general.'

The branches of some trees are observed to flourish with vigour, even though their internal parts have vanished ; but we never observe this in the character or fortune of man. The main point is the main object, without securing which the structure withers. The only difficulty is, in what does the main point consist ?

CXC.

WHO WILL AND WHO WILL NOT.

SOME politicians act in this manner : ' they will and ' they will not.' They begin well, and finish with making bricks without straw.

It was said of Lord Grey, during the feverish state of public opinion, that he, too, would and would not : he would give the people their rights, and yet continue their wrongs. This proved erroneous. He gave all that he promised. He gave as good a reform, (*it is said*) as the people of the day could estimate. ' He planned ' it in the enthusiasm of youth ;' say they, ' he supported

‘ it through all difficulties in the season of manhood ;
 ‘ and lived to consummate in the wisdom of age.’

The duty of all appears to be this : we should analyze measures unregardful of men ; and cling to plans which the wisest of our age believe to be essential to the public good. To insist upon those, which cannot be carried, is useless. There are, also, so many views to be taken of great national questions, that to make up our minds in the spirit of obstinate retention of what we wish, is to prove our incompetence to the general affairs of state. To know what and when to retain is equally important with the knowing what and when to bestow.

CXCI.

WHO ARE UNEQUAL.

ALL men are unequal. ‘ Tintoret,’ said Annibal Caracci, ‘ rises beyond Titian ; sometimes he sinks ‘ beneath himself.’ Neither Homer nor Virgil exhibits any very great inequalities ; but Tasso does, and so do Shakspeare and Milton. The latter could not fail to be unequal ; the Deity and the ‘ concurrence of heaven,’ being beyond the limited faculties of man.

CXCH.

WHO WILL NOT SEE TILL THE LAST MOMENT.

MANY can see, if they will ; but they will not. ‘ Oh, ‘ my dear friend,’ wrote Galileo to Kepler, ‘ how I ‘ wish that we could have one hearty laugh together !

‘ Here, at Padua, is the principal professor of philosophy, whom I have repeatedly and urgently requested to look at the moon and planets, which he pertinaciously refuses to do. Why are you not here? What shouts of laughter we should have at this glorious folly! and to hear the professor of philosophy at Pisa labouring before the grand duke with logical arguments, as if, with magical incantations, to charm the new planets out of the sky.’

It certainly is mortifying to be compelled to see when we think it is our interest to be blind. Some, however, will see; but then they will not see till the last moment.

Had the Duke of Wellington consented to make but a small reform, he would not have been compelled to see a reform asserted by law, greater in extent than some friends of reform had ever dared to dream of.

We may apply this to Lord North and his unfortunate compeers in respect to the American war. They miscalculated every thing. ‘ Recourse was had to force,’ said Mr. Burke; ‘ and we saw a force sent out enough to menace liberty, but not to awe resistance; tending to bring odium on the civil power, and content on the military; at once to provoke and encourage resistance.’

Had Lord North conceded to justice; or had he even yielded a small right, the revolted colonies had not insisted on a great one.

It must, nevertheless, be confessed, that no colonies can long be retained as subjects, after they have attained

sufficient strength to govern themselves. Lord North's war was, therefore, perhaps,—after all—a mere anticipation.

CXIII.

WHO CARRY EVERY THING TO EXTREMITY.

LOUIS XI., for instance. Execrable as the man assuredly was, he had some virtues; and he ran both virtues and vices to the utmost extreme. La Mothe le Vayer says * of him, that he wore his coats till they were threadbare; his hats, till they were greasy; and sleeves, tacked to his doublets, as if they did not belong to them: such was the sordid nature of his avarice in some things, though in others he was prodigal to extremity, more particularly to his mistresses, and to subjects belonging to his hunting establishments. Some writers †, however, insist, that he dressed in this manner, the more effectually to ridicule the pomp and splendour of other kings. But this could have been no excuse for making his tailor herald-at-arms, or his barber an ambassador. †

What curious extremes, too, governed Anniceris of Athens! His love of philosophy induced him to redeem Plato, when Dionysius sold him to slavery; and yet so attached was he to the art of driving chariots, that he arrived, at last, to such perfection, that he drove round the academy twice, and the wheels of his chariot, as he went the second time, never once deviated from the track he made on the first.

* Tom. viii. 83.

† Bossuet, &c.

*If they were killed for these
 experiments, why not?*

This exploit was useless enough; but,—at least, as far as my knowledge on such subjects extends,—it was never done before, nor has it ever been done since.

CXCV.

MARPLOTS.

THUS, Titania to Oberon in *Midsummer's Night's Dream* :—

‘ Never
 Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
 By paved fountain, or by rushy brook,
 Or by the beached margin of the sea,
 To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
 But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.’

How many thousand persons are there of this sort! They act as perfect Marplots on every occasion: now by accident; more often from ignorance; and still more frequently by design. It matters not one straw what the subject in hand may be; whether an affair of state, a matter of gallantry, a subject of business, or a party of pleasure. They are present; the success, or the comfort, therefore, of the whole is marred! This order of men was known in ancient Greece, as well as to modern nations. Theophrastus alludes to them:— ‘ They put a stop to business and pleasure,’ says he. ‘ When they sit on a bench, they distract their colleagues: when at the theatre, they prevent those who sit near them from seeing the spectacle; and at table they almost prevent their neighbours from eating.’

Marplots resemble one of those narrow defiles, in

which the overturning of a carriage, or the breaking of a trace, stop the progress of the whole army.

—————‘Whate’er their doubtful hands
Attempt, confusion straight appears behind,
And troubles all the work.’—*Akenside*, iii. 228.

Cæsar acted the part of a self-marplot, after he had obtained the dictatorship. Pride ruined him ; yet Napoleon having followed the example, both serve to remind us of what a French writer* says in regard to Danton:—‘He was destroyed by his own contrivance, ‘like a child playing with gunpowder.’

James II., also, was his own Marplot : and this the Pope, then reigning, knew well. Hence, when Lord Castlemaine was sent ambassador to Rome, his Holiness received him in a very contemptuous manner. Wherefore ? Because he knew that James was overturning his own throne, without effecting anything for that of the papal hierarchy. To succeed against Protestantism, the Pope thought the best way was, not to attack openly, but to sap and undermine.

Mirabeau † lets us into a secret :—‘The best way is ‘to ask too much.’

It is in the power of the most contemptible of mankind to inflict injuries, which the best and most discreet are never able to repair. We inflict injuries, equally irreparable, not unfrequently on ourselves. Nothing could exceed the rage of Napoleon when he marched to the borders of Russia, and found no enemy with whom to contend. He had calculated on deciding the conquest of that empire by a single blow. On pass-

* *Tableau des Prisons sous Robespierre*,

† *Lettres à Mauvillon*, 469.

ing the Niemen, he became so impatient, that Segur assures us*, he dashed all at once into the forest, which lines the sides of that river, at the utmost extremity of his horse's speed. He appeared on fire to come singly in contact with the enemy. He rode more than a league in this frantic manner; but perceiving no signs of an enemy, he returned to the vicinity of the bridges, over which his army was passing. The fact is, Napoleon, too, was his own Marplot. He resembled the man who, having money only to buy one coat, tore it, because he suspected the tailor had deceived him in the materials.

Some of the Duke of Wellington's friends were strangely fearful that he, also, should mar the honour of a whole life: and how? by his introduction of the Catholic Bill! 'My Lord Duke,' said Lord Eldon, 'you are a great man; a very great man; you have fought many battles, and have gained many noble victories. But my Lord Duke, beware lest by one act of your life, you outweigh all the fame you have acquired. You are said to have fought the French, inch by inch, on the plains of Waterloo. Be assured, my Lord Duke, I shall fight the great Protestant battle, inch by inch, on the floor of the House of Lords.' And he did so; but, for the honour of the country, and the safety of it, also, the Catholic Bill passed the House of Peers by an overwhelming majority. To wrong,—and then to calumniate—five millions of men for being faithful to their religion—*pro pudor!* The very thought is an insult to the MAJESTY of the MIND.

For the Catholic Bill I ardently return thanks to his

* B. ii. c. 2

Grace. But, now—(Jan. 1, 1831)* alas, how changed! The Duke has become his own Marplot in reality and in permanency of effect, by having made, a short time since, a declaration, that no reform is wanted in this country; and that the representation is as perfect as the human mind can make it! A few days after,—so great and fatal an effect had this declaration on the public mind,—he ceased to be minister of this magnificent empire.

CXCIV.

WHO ATTEMPT TO CATCH BIRDS WITH CHAFF.

MEN of ability sometimes fall martyrs to opinions, not sufficiently plausible to deceive even a mere tyro in political science. They would catch old birds with chaff. Lord Howard of Esencke, for instance, affected to win Algernon Sydney to a more favourable disposition in respect to the interests of James Duke of Monmouth, by observing to him, that a prince, with a defective title, would, at all times, consider himself at the discretion of the hereditary claimant, provided he should lose the affections of his people, by neglecting their interests. Sydney, however, was not to be caught by so plausible an argument; and as an instance of its fallacy, we have no farther to travel than to a neighbouring kingdom, though it must be confessed, that, with all his crimes, Napoleon was not an usurper. At least, if he were an usurper, William of Orange was a greater.

* These papers having been written at various times, and not arranged according to those times, the reader will, no doubt, excuse occasional anachronisms.

For when William landed in England, James had not been dethroned; nor had he been charged with abdication either by flight or concession. Millions of money have been expended, and millions of men have been sacrificed, to support a contrary doctrine; but the principle, I hope, is now firmly established, that all legitimate power springs, not from a faction, however high in quality or weighty in numbers, but from the people.

CXCVI.

SUCCESS OF SOME COMPARED TO KITES.

DRYDEN says, in his play of Cleomenes :—

————— ‘ Some are born kings,
 Made up of three parts fire; so full of heaven,
 It sparkles at their eyes. Inferior souls
 Know them as soon as seen, by sure instinct,
 To be their lords, and naturally worship
 The secret god within them.’

With all my respect for Dryden, I cannot refrain from confessing, that if this is not nonsense, I think it is very much like it. It cannot, however, fail to be attractive to all lovers of bombast.

Some, in their fortunes, remind us of the kite, which glides with a motion through the air so easy, that we perceive little motion in its wings. They do things, too, with such facility, that their works appear to rise from their hands like a flower from the laboratory of Nature. Others, on the other hand, can scarcely place the right foot before the left, but they seem to partake

of the care, caution, and weight of the largest elephant in Ava.

Some pause and weigh, reflect, and tremble before the slightest of all obstacles : others, like the horses of Apollo, guided by Phaeton—

————— ‘ Bound and blaze along
Their devious course, magnificently wrong!’

Yet might these men, rightly chastised and disciplined in youth, glide amid the avenues of life, calmly and prudently, to the end ; as some wild and difficult Alpine plants thrive well even in the closest courts of Paris, Florence, Madrid, and Vienna.

CXCVII.

SALLUST, IN REGARD TO SUCCESS.

THE favour of heaven, according to Sallust, is not secured by vows or prayers ; but by vigilance, activity, and a proper attention to the mode of action necessary to command success.

Men are certainly, to all outward appearance, as much the architects of their own fortunes as they are of their own ruin. But this is in appearance only. Nor is this assertion at all invalidated by the observation of Machiavel, that he, who waits for all conveniences, either undertakes nothing, or fails in all he undertakes.

The wild turkey perches on trees, and gains the height he wishes, by rising from bough to bough. ‘ We must gain things,’ said Victor Amadeus, ‘ as artichokes grow, leaf by leaf, till we arrive at the apex.’

CXCIV.

WHO CANNOT STAY LONG IN A PLACE.

SOME years since, when sitting on the summit of Snowdon, having a view of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, the isle of Anglesea, and the isle of Man, a thought crossed my mind, that no happiness could equal that of travelling from one country to another.

A few days since, having, from the hill at Cassel (in the department of the North), a still more distinct view of Belgium, with innumerable towns and villages of France, and Dover Castle rising over the sea in the distance, I remembered an assertion of Thomson, that the great charm of travel arises out of the anticipation of it, in the first instance, and the memory of it afterwards.

Many are the men, who, if they could command their time and a sufficient sum of money, would never be three days in the same place; and of this order was Francis I.

'Francis, the king,' declared Castellanus in his funeral eulogy, 'is gone directly to Paradise.' The Sorbonne were offended; and so much so, that they sent to court to complain of it. They insisted that Francis was in purgatory. 'He may have been there,' said Mendoza, who had been his majesty's steward; 'but he is not there now. I know his temper better than any one. He can never bear to stay anywhere long. If he did go to purgatory, he merely passed through. He has got to Paradise long before this.'

CXCIX.

FERDINAND I. OF SPAIN.

CARDINAL DE RETZ (though, I believe, the anecdote is not to be found in his memoirs) was accustomed to say, that he once saw a man seize the vane of a windmill, which took him round with it, and left him, after one revolution, on the spot it took him up. An escape like this is not very common; but it is an every-day circumstance to see bad men ride well, and on the best horses too.

Fortune threw a multitude of good things into the lap of Ferdinand I. He seized upon Navarre; he conquered Naples and Grenada; he subjugated Tunis, Tripoli, and Algiers; he succeeded in establishing the Inquisition; he expelled the Jews; conquered the Moors; was honoured with the title of 'Most Catholic Majesty;' gained a kingdom by marriage; and, without cost, obtained the empire of a new world*.

Yet was he a mean, selfish, cruel, and defenceless character; and almost deserved the ignominy of being grandfather to Philip II. Nevertheless, if we may credit many historians, he might have said, and with no small apparency of justice,

————— 'I deem myself
The child of fortune, in whose favouring smile
I shall not be dishonour'd.'

Sophocles; Edipus Tyrannus; Dale.

* One of the most beautiful pieces of biography of the present day, is that of Columbus by Irving. See vol. i. p. 105.

Well had it been for this prince,—as well as for a thousand others,—had he taken for the text of his government a passage from Antoninus*.

Early to know, that elevation of condition is no security from misfortune, is an admirable inheritance for a prince; and the more so, since the great majority of princes appear to suppose, that before their desires mountains should fall and oceans vanish.

Marmontel has a beautiful passage in his political romance of Belisarius:—‘Amid all the brilliancy of his fortune, a sovereign is no more than a mere man; overwhelmed with splendid cares, distracted with anxieties; a self-consuming votarist for the public good; a victim to his duty, if he be zealous to perform it; an object of scorn if he neglect it; and of detestation should he betray it.’ The reason why kings and statesmen have disappointed mankind so often is answered by the reply of some one to a person, who had justified Tacitus and Graciano, on the ground that they wrote only for kings and statesmen:—‘Alas! kings and statesmen understand with no greater facility than common persons.’

* ‘Si quid in vitâ humanâ invenis potiùs justitiâ, veritate, temperantiâ, fortitudine, ad ejus amplexum totius animi contendas suadeo.’—lib. iii.

CC.

WHO NEVER FORSAKE THEIR SPHERE OF BUSINESS.

CLARENDON says of the Lord Keeper Coventry* :—
 ‘ Though by his place he presided in all councils, and
 ‘ was most sharp-sighted in consequence of things, yet
 ‘ he was seldom known to speak in matters of state,
 ‘ which, he well knew, were, for the most part, con-
 ‘ cluded before they were brought to that public agita-
 ‘ tion; never in foreign affairs; nor, indeed, freely in
 ‘ anything but what immediately and plainly concerned
 ‘ the justice of the kingdom; and in that, as much as
 ‘ he could, he procured references to judges.’

This order may be very useful in ordinary times; but of great hinderance in times of doubt; and of absolute incumbrance in seasons of difficulty and danger; for if we analyze strictly in reference to the testimony of Clarendon, we shall find that this order of character resolves itself chiefly into a mere creature of shiftings and precedents.

CCI.

STRAINERS AT GNATS AND SWALLOWERS OF CAMELS.

BEING some years since in the gardens and shrubberies of Burleigh House, near Stamford, I saw a statue, which, I was told, was that of the celebrated Cecil, Lord Burleigh; and I allude to this now from the circumstance of his having said, one day, to his son, who was hesitating whether or not he should kill a

* Vol. i. 45, 131.

wasp he held in his hand between two twigs—‘ Boy! do not you become one of those blockheads, who strain at gnats; lest you be, one day, called upon to swallow camels.’

Gregory the Great seems to have hated heretics more than he did infidels; for while he persecuted, with great severity, those whom he styled heretics, he would permit no violence to be offered to the Jews. He seems, also, to have loved his creed so well, that nothing could exceed his hatred to every species of learning; an anomaly evident from his writings, more especially his dialogues and epistles.

This straining at gnats is scarcely more confined to one sect than to another. The Puritans had a great objection to many customs; such as set forms of prayer, bowing at the name of Christ, licensing marriages, presenting the ring, and kneeling at the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. Yet these very pious persons made a law, that every one, who should be seen intoxicated twice, should suffer the penalty of death!

Let us proceed to other stations and persons. Bernis was created a cardinal through the interest of Madame de Pompadour. Through the same interest he had been sent to Venice, then to the Hague, and lastly he was elevated to the ministry. He had already amassed benefices to the amount of 14,000*l.* a-year. He retained his premiership, however, but a very short time; for, one night, as he was retiring to bed, he was served with a *lettre-de-cachet*, with orders to quit Paris and retire to his bishopric by the following morning. The cause of this was a curious species of impertinence.

Walpole gives us the key; let him, therefore, state it. 'The cause was imputed to his own folly. He, who had scrupled to receive no benefits from the mistress; nay, whose flatteries had obtained the greatest, and whose conscience had stooped to owe to her interest the first dignity in the church, grew at once conscientiously ungrateful and arrogantly absurd, refusing to wait on her in her apartment, and to communicate in the dignity of the purple with a woman of so unsanctimonious a character. The world laughed at his impertinent pretences, and she punished them*.' And this reminds me of Madame de Montespan †. Though wife to one person and mistress to another, and still living in that guilty commerce, she was so strict in her observance of Lent, that even her bread was weighed. This inconsistency was alluded to, one day, by the Duchess d'Uzies. 'What, madam,' answered Madame de Montespan, 'because I chance to be guilty of one crime, must I be capable of all the rest?'

We find this foible operating in a thousand ways. La Mothe le Vayer felt great pleasure in hearing thunder, but could not endure the sound of musical instruments. Mr. Pelham would scruple to give a hundred pounds to one opponent; but to buy off another, we are told, he would not give up a question that might endanger a nation. The Marquis de Condorcet's conscience would not allow him to vote for the death of Louis XVI.; but he wished to propose that he should

* Mem. Geo. II., i. 333.

† Memoirs, &c. from the Souvenirs of Mad. de Caylus.

be condemned to the galleys for life. Shall we go still higher? Henry VIII., though a violator of every law, decreed the punishment of the stake to all who should deny transubstantiation; who asserted that it was lawful for priests to marry; or who should presume to declare auricular confession to be unnecessary. And this reminds us of the Emperor Macrinus. He was cruel to the extremity of cruelty to answer the purposes of his lust; yet he punished adultery by tying the guilty parties together, and burning them alive. He would himself commit a murder, and glory in the act. The Roman imperial history abounds with similar instances.

Italy,—more than any other country,—has been, in all ages, remarkable for admiring what are called deep strokes of policy. To excite admiration, heroic enterprises are not quite so imperative as successful ones. Virtue excites the admiration of the few; splendid policy that of the many.

It cannot be concealed, that most statesmen strain at gnats, and swallow not only camels, but large camels. Hence, to abridge the sentiments of a French historian*, it cannot be otherwise than conceded, that the iniquity of many laws, the unjust distribution of property, the insolence of rank, the impunity of wealth, and the abuse of power, have often driven good subjects into rebellion, and converted even good men into criminals.

Perish the hand, that, in the brilliancy of an action, loses all consideration of its injustice.

Men gaze on a dead body, habited in funeral para-

* Raynal.

phernalia, with fear and awe. They witness a battle or an execution with far different emotions. One skull affects the mind more than twenty, because it concentrates it. As Napoleon was riding over the field, after the battle of the Moskwa, the foot of his horse encountered a wounded man. It elicited his last breath! Napoleon was affected; and one of his aide-de-camps, to pacify the feeling, observed that the man was only a Russian. 'After victory,' returned the Emperor, 'dying men are no longer enemies.' This is, no doubt, a fine sentiment; but Napoleon might have recollected, that a fine sentiment, after an atrocious deed, is but a poor equivalent; besides, the Regent Duke of Orleans, many years before, had employed not only the same sentiment, but the very words. Napoleon was, in a thousand instances, not only a very correct but a very successful imitator.

Princes, indeed, sometimes make use of very specious arguments wherewith to justify their cruel deeds. We cannot forget the consolation, which Peter the Great is made* to pour into the ears of Catherine, when about to appear before the seat of Minos:—'How shall I answer him,' says Catherine, 'when he requires an account of the thousands sacrificed within the walls of Ismailoff, of Otchakof, and in the suburbs of Warsaw?' 'Say,' answers Peter, 'that, perhaps, the least bloody wars are those in which the most blood is apparently spilt; and that to amaze one's enemies by splendid victories, which awe them, is more hu-

* L'Ombre de Catherine II. aux Champs Elysées.

‘ mane than to suffer armies to be destroyed by a series
‘ of insignificant battles perpetually renewed.’

Alexander could see a field of battle, strewed with the dreadful evidences of his own folly, pride, and extravagance, unmoved; but when his horse, Bucephalus, died, he could weep! He could weep, too, when he heard that the finest lion in Babylon had been kicked to death by an ass.

‘ A falcon, towering in his pride of place,
Was, by a mousing owl, hawk’d at and kill’d.’

He crucified two thousand Tyrians, and passed on; he murdered Clytus, and wept again!

What do we learn from the fidelity of Zopyrus, as related with admiration by Herodotus*, Justin †, and Plutarch ‡? The act of Zopyrus was atrocity itself; and the consent and co-partnery of Darius still worse. Yet glory has ever been attached to the act, because it seems to have emanated from the chief virtue of a soldier—fidelity. Alas! many are the crimes which we associate with virtues.

CCIL

WHO INJURE THEIR OWN CAUSES.

It is certain, that some persons injure their own causes much more essentially than all the persons to whom they are opposed. Dr. Birch says § of John, Duke of Lauderdale, that he was, in his principles, much against

* Vol. iii. c. 156.

† Lib. i. c. 10.

‡ In *Apoph.*

§ P. 118; folio.

poperly and arbitrary government ; and yet, by a fatal train of passions and interests, he made way for the one, and had almost established the other.

Many men of the present day have equally injured their good old cause of vanity and corruption : for hostility to freedom of action, speech, and thought, does but extend the knowledge of those benefits, and serves to strengthen and accelerate their growth ; so that, in the end, they will leave to despotism no hiding-place, no generating principle ; therefore, no power either of extension or of renewal.

‘ Myriads on myriads, insect armies waft
Keen in the poison’d breeze ; and wasteful eat
Through buds and bark, into the blacken’d core
Their eager way *.’

The time will come, perhaps, when even these will eat no longer. Heaven speed such a result !

CCIII.

WHO CAN SOAR OR SIT.

THE indigo bird, richly plumaged, sometimes flies along the gardens, bushes, and road-sides ; and at others mounts the tallest trees, and chants for half-an-hour at a time. A friend said to me, yesterday,—‘ I can soar ‘ with the eagle, or sit with the wren.’

With an original want of flexibility, delicacy, and gentleness, this friend won his way through neglect, hatred, envy, jealousy, and penury ; and at length sits quietly under his vine-tree, sweetening and sanctifying

* Thomson ; Spring, 120.

the admiration of his children for all that is great, good, and illustrious. His mind is hushed in the contemplation of a great design.

CCIV.

WHO CONTRACT THEIR WANTS.

IN a well-regulated state a man, with industry, may obtain almost every thing he desires, if he will but contract his wants into the circle of his means; but it is not so in an ill-regulated community, because, in a society of that kind, men are unable to obtain even the commonest necessaries, unless they plan and struggle for more than they want. In the first instance, they plan and strive for the things wanted, and obtain the whole; in the second, they plan for double what is wanted, and lose the whole; or if they do obtain the whole, or even a part, the pain of acquiring is more than equivalent to the pleasure of acquiring.

In the former instance, the pleasure of pursuit is even superior to the pleasure of possession; in the latter the pleasure of pursuit is lost in the pain arising from the trouble and hazard of obtaining. The journey of the one is performed, as it were, in a day of May; that of the other in the dreary hours of November, December, January, and February.

CCV.

WHOSE CUNNING DECLARES ITS IMBECILITY.

NAPOLEON, during nearly the whole of his march from Dresden to Moscow, hoped to receive some communication from the Emperor Alexander. He had only one, and that of little or no consequence. At length, embarrassed with the magnitude of his plan, he desired Berthier to state in a letter to General Barclay, — ‘The Emperor directs me to request you to present his compliments to the Emperor Alexander; tell him, that neither the vicissitudes of war, nor any other circumstance, can diminish the friendship he entertains for him.’ For Napoleon to suppose that Alexander could be deceived by a message like this, we should,—had we not known his capability better,—have supposed him to have been a very great, nay, a very laughable, blockhead. It certainly, however, proves, and that very satisfactorily, that he was, occasionally, if not a very great fool, at least a very great knave: and this may serve to remind us that the French have a saying, that a wise man learns to shave on the chin of a fool.

Some men’s eyes resemble those of insects; they are immovable. Some resemble the bittern, which opens its bill so widely, that the eyes appear to be fixed in the bill; and some the lynx, the eyes of which were supposed, in ancient times, to have the power of seeing, not only through stone walls, but marble and granite. Others pretend to sound where no line can fathom; and their vision resembles those of the fallen spirits, as drawn by Dante:—

‘ We view, as one who hath an evil sight,
 ———plainly, objects far remote ;
 ———but when they approach,
 Or actually exist, our intellect
 Then wholly fails.’—*Cary ; Inferno.*

And this reminds us of Alcina in Ariosto*, who, externally, was all beauty and captivation ; internally, filthy and detestable ; the figurative personification of mental blindness and dissimulation. And many men are so, who think themselves exceedingly wise. Leo X., for instance, circumvented every one at the beginning of his pontificate †, by the easiness of his manners, and the depth of his imposture ; yet he laid the foundation,—much against his intention,—for the subsequent degradation of the Roman See.

Lord Cowper says ‡ of Harley (Earl of Oxford), that he loved tricks, not from their necessity, but from an inward satisfaction he felt in applauding his own cunning. If so, he resembled one of the electors of Bavaria. ‘ Sir,’ said Gustavus Adolphus to St. Etienne, ‘ the elector of Bavaria is a sort of prince, who keeps in his wardrobe a set of upper garments of various hues ; and changes those exterior robes convertibly with his interests, wearing black one day, white a second, variegated colours a third day, but always concealing the Burgundian cross next his heart. If it is his sincere desire to be well received in our court, let him produce himself in one unvarying form. Let him open the gates of Ingoldstadt, disband his army,

* Orlando Furioso.

† Guic. ; Hist. d’Ital., xvi.

‡ Diary. Hardwicke Papers.

‘refund his extortions, restore the palatinate, reform what is past, and give good security for all which is to come.’

Lambert, in Cromwell’s time, was greatly addicted to stratagem; but he gained little by his plots and plans. To disguise his ambition, and watch his opportunities, he went to his house at Wimbledon, and ‘fell to dresse his flowers in his garden, and work at the needle with his wife and maides*’. Alas!

————— ‘Who seeks in these
True wisdom, finds her not; or, by delusion,
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,
An empty cloud!’—*Par. Regained*, iv. 318.

There is a proverb †, implying, that a small share of cunning argues a vast deal of imbecility. There can be no doubt of this! Cunning is, in fact, the ass clad in the lion’s skin; and hence, for example, we may despise all the Te Deums, which are chanted merely for the purpose of disguising a defeat.

CCVI.

WHO CHANGE THEIR SKINS AS IT WERE.

St. Vincent’s rocks. THIS romantic scene is said to resemble the vale of Tempe. The stone is a species of marble, being susceptible of polish; and many plants are found growing spontaneously, that are little, if at all, known in any other part of the kingdom.

Yesterday the sun went down shrouded in mist; and

* *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*, p. 341. 4to.

† *Un poco di scaltrezza è molto imbecillità.*

so intense a darkness immediately succeeded, that we could almost have fancied ourselves in one of those planets, in which, from the want of an atmosphere, the transitions from light to darkness, and from darkness to light, are instantaneous.

To-day we saw, for the first time in our lives, a snake in the act of casting its skin. We saw it with pleasure ; for every thing, that is new to us in Nature, has a permanent interest.

Some plants cast their cuticles every year ; a new one being generated underneath. Of this the alder is an example. Not only lobsters reproduce their claws, after losing them, but crabs, crayfish, prawns, pandels, and shrimps. Spiders, also, reproduce their legs ; and fable, if not truth, assures us (according to Varro and Strabo), that iron and other metals have the power of reproducing in the mine.

Men, also, change their skins, as it were, not only every year, but almost every day.

Plato has a fine passage in his ' Banquet,' in regard to the changes we are perpetually undergoing. We are new men both in body and soul ; in our hair, flesh, bones, and blood ; in our habits, manners, and opinions ; wants, wishes, pleasures, and pains. These being for ever changing, their places are supplied by others. Even our knowledge is in perpetual fluctuation. We lose to-day and acquire again to-morrow. We remember this moment what we had been incapable of recollecting three minutes before. We are, nevertheless, called the same person, let us grow as old as we will, and undergo as many changes as we may. But time and expe-

rience contradict the assertion. We are essentially different.

CCVII.

BRAWLERS FOR EQUALITY.

MILTON says:—

————— ‘Orders and degrees
Jar not with liberty; but well consist.’—*Par. Lost*, v. 791.

So Shakspeare, in Henry V.—

‘Government, though high, and low, and lower,
Put into parts, doth keep in one consent;
Congruing in a full and natural close,
Like music.’

Equality is a phantom! ‘Were we all upon an equality,’ said Johnson, ‘we should have no other enjoyment than mere animal pleasure. Our tails would grow.’

‘You are not, by this term,’ says Voltaire, in his *Essay on the Spirit of Nations**, ‘to understand that absurd and impossible equality, by which the master and the servant, the magistrate and the artificer, the plaintiff and the judge, are confounded together; but that equality by which the subject depends only on the laws.’

There are some, however, nay, a multitude, who, in their *argument*, desire nothing less than equality; but who, in their *practice*, are not quite so extravagant. They have no wish to raise those beneath *up* to their level; but to bring those who are beyond, *down*

* See, also, Clement, *Roman Epist.* c. 37, &c.

to their level. This, for the most part, is the darling end of their enthusiasm.

Equality? How can we be idle enough to expect such a consummation, when nothing of the kind is visible to our senses in all the regions of Nature?—the most constant of her laws being that of inequality. The fiat is pronounced on all that exist; it glows in all that we feel; in all that we understand.

In nothing does it speak more decidedly than in men. Who shall equalize their forms and countenances? Who shall define the myriads of combinations arising from their thoughts? the contrasts or unisons of their sensations? the modifications arising out of climate, education, habits of life, diseases, pains, enjoyments, aspirations, depressions, opportunities, wants, superfluities, defects, powers, capabilities, disabilities, prejudices, passions, and affections?

Nature, in fact, has stamped inequality on all that is created. It is even probable, that no two rays of light are strictly consonant either in form or in operation.

‘ How swift is the glance of the mind !
 Compared with the speed of its flight,
 The tempest itself lags behind,
 And the swift-winged arrows of light.’

It is, nevertheless, certain, that not one of the satellites, planets, asteroids, comets, or suns, any more than the earth on which we stand, occupies the same point of space at the end even of our swiftest thought, that it did at the beginning.

CCVIII.

WHO POSSESS IN SEEING.

THIS is an exquisite faculty!

Bishop Berkeley was accustomed to say, that he cared little who had the keeping of an estate, as long as he could enjoy the sight of it, and be indulged in the privilege of walking over it. He seems, indeed, to have always been in the humour to exclaim with Goldsmith:—

‘ Ye glitt’ring towns, with wealth and splendour crown’d,
Ye fields, where summer spreads profusion round,
Ye lakes, whose vessels catch the busy gale,
Ye bending swains, that dress the flow’ry vale,
For me your tributary stores combine;
Creation’s heir, the world, the world is mine.’

There is not a property in the whole range of thought superior to this.

CCIX.

THREE ORDERS OF PERSONS.

SOME sink lower than they have any necessity:
Cowper says most men do so.

‘ It is the abject property of most,
That, being parcels of the common mass,
And destitute of means to raise themselves,
They sink, and settle lower than they need.’

Winter Morning’s Walk.

Others aim at heights, and fancy that all things will be subservient to their wills. They would form a syllable without a vowel; and almost feel as if their breath

—————' Could still the winds,
Uncloud the sun, charm down the swelling sea,
And stop the floods of Heaven.'—*Beaumont and Fletcher.*

Others know the strength and feel the beauty of another tale:—

' Ah! who can tell how many a soul, sublime,
Has felt the influence of malignant star;
And waged with fortune an eternal war.
Check'd by the scoff of Pride, by Envy's frown,
And Poverty's unconquerable bar,
In life's low vale, remote, has pined alone,
Then dropp'd into the grave—unpitied and unknown!
Beattie; Minstrel.

CCX.

WHOSE FORTUNES MAY BE COMPARED TO MINUETS.

SOME men's fortunes are like minuets; in which, after many turnings, approaches, and crossings, the parties come to the very spot on which they began the dance. Voltaire makes a similar comparison in regard to metaphysicians.

To the fortunes of some the sun never rises; to that of others it never appears to set. Every event of the former seems to resemble the asteroids; which are (erroneously) said to be little better than component parts of a dislocated planet.

With some,—

—/ Destiny, seeing them divine,
Spins all their fortune in a silken twine.'

Dryden; The Maiden Queen.

With others, fortune appears really beyond the bearing of a man! yet these Gallienus seems * to have held in something like respect; for he gave a prize to one who always lost; esteeming it far less difficult to hit the mark than always to miss it.

The fortune of many reminds one of the spondylus; a bivalve, which, after fastening its shells to the rocks at the bottom of the ocean, has them frequently bored through by the pholas, or some other species of marine insect.

CCXI.

WHOM FORTUNE RAISES, AS IF TO SHOW HER POWER
AND CAPRICE.

LYDGATE describes Boccaccio as being astonished at the appearance of Fortune.

'What may this meane? Is this a creature,
Or a monstre, transfourmed agayne nature,
Whose brenning eyne spercle of their lyght,
As do the sterres the frosty wynter nyght †.'

Some places are exceedingly fortunate. Florence, like Athens, rose to the height of its power in fifty years; and Bologna gave to the papal court ten popes,

* Trebellius Pollio in Gallieno, c. 12.

† Of this translation there is a most beautifully illuminated copy among the Harleian MSS., No. 1766; see also No. 2278.

and a hundred cardinals. There is, however, generally speaking, an evident reason for all things. There is no victory, however extraordinary, but, when explained, is simple enough. Indeed, so evident, sometimes, are the causes, that an acute observer may witness their results even in the womb of futurity, with as much precision as a florist can detect the flowers of the future spring in the bulbs of the tulip, hyacinth, and hepatica, and the plant of the future year in the germs of the *Daphne mezereon*. Thus, when the Venetians conquered the Turks in the great battle of Lepanto, the victory was the result neither of prowess nor of skill. Their soldiers were more fresh and vigorous; they were better armed; the Turks using, generally, only bows and arrows. Their ships were much less open, and, therefore, more susceptible of defence, and more capable of attack. To these may be added an accidental circumstance—the wind was favourable. Events, indeed, are seldom the results of the guilty caprices of Fortune.

It is certain, that what is the most probable is not always the most true: it is certain, that a paradox is presented in all human affairs; it is certain, that a shallow head has always a contracted aim; and that a comprehensive judgment has, almost equally frequent, an enlarged result for its contemplation, and for its exercise and reward a rich benevolence of heart. But no one can command. Honour pursues and leads the guilty; want depresses the kind and the considerate; the base usurp the dominion of fortune; the good die at thirty; and grey hairs frequently render venerable that countenance which, if guilt could blush, would indicate the consciousness of a thousand crimes.

CCXII.

SYLLA'S CONFESSION.

‘ Obsequious, artful, voluble, and gay.’

THESE are the fawning, cringing, creeping, crawling generation.

‘ Sir, I have lived a courtier all my days,
And studied men, their manners, and their ways ;
And have observed this useful maxim still,
To let my betters ever have their will.’

This is the widest way to Fortune ; for it is courting her in a manner in which she delights. She is not often carried by storm, except by men in high stations ; every thing, or most things, in her power to bestow, being gained by the intrigue of the suitors, or the caprice of the sued.

Sylla made a remarkable confession* :—‘ Of all my ‘ actions, though all were undertaken upon the greatest ‘ deliberation, and regulated according to the justest ‘ measures, those,’ said he, ‘ which I have been forced ‘ to execute in a different manner from what I had at ‘ first projected, and which I have adventured on a ‘ sudden, have always been the most successful.’ He attributed every thing to fortune ; nothing to skill, or even to valour.

* Vide Plutarch.

CCXIII.

WHO CAN LIVE ALONE.

THE waters of the Rhine, before they flow into the lake of Constance, are of a bluish colour; when they issue thence, they are of a grass green; and, after receiving many tributaries as they pass through Alsace and the Black Forest, they at length assume a green hue, mixed with yellow. This is the colour of the falling leaf; and that reminds me of the season of autumn, which, in turn, brings to our recollection the fading manhood of the mind.

In the bosom of the Snowdon mountains there is a lake, than which, in summer, nothing can be more delightful to a lover of solitude. When I have sat, or mused along the borders of this clear, transparent surface, where, as the sun has sunk in the west, rocks, woods, and mountains are depicted with all that soft and illusive lustre, which the clouds and the blue sky render so beautiful; when I have beheld the plants flowering on the bosom of this lake, and have compared the quietude of the scene with the rush, the crash, the poison, the intrigue, and din of a large city, how deeply have I felt the truism, that in solitude there is peace!

Duppa, in reference to Michael Angelo, affords* some insight into the practice of the world, in regard to those, who have sufficient intellectual energy to enable them to live alone. 'From a ruling passion to culti-

* Page 161; 4to.

'vate his mind,' says he, 'Michael Angelo became habituated to solitude; and, happy in his pursuits, he was more content to be alone than in company, by which he *obtained the character of being a proud and an odd man*; distinctions that never fail to be given to those, with whom we wish to find fault for not resembling ourselves.'

Vasari seems to have been one of those who know, tolerably well, how to live in a village; and that is no mean accomplishment. 'I pass my time,' says he, in a letter to Serguidi *, 'in reading and contemplating the Deity without sin, and without offending my neighbours with malicious scandal. The village is my resource when melancholy; and to view the rural prospect, morning and evening, so soothes my mind, that, next to God, I am indebted to it for the tranquillity I enjoy.'

Tasso, however, presents a different picture. 'I am afflicted beyond all,' wrote he to a friend (Scipione Gonzaga), 'by the solitude in which I am placed; solitude being my sworn enemy; and having been so terrible to me even in my best days, that I was running about at all hours, even the most unseasonable, to find company.' Tasso, indeed, with all his height of qualification, was far from having been one of those, who have power to

——— 'Steal from the degenerate crowd,
And soar above this little scene of things.'

Thomson; Autumn, l. 962.

* Dated Arezzo, July 6, 1537.

‘ I have resolved on leaving this vast metropolis,’ wrote one of my friends (writing from London) to his brother, then residing in Paris ; ‘ I am not qualified to make way in it. There are sacrifices required which I do not feel myself disposed to make ; to flatter and to bend before those I regard in no way superior to myself ; to say one thing when I mean another ; and to write that which I know ought not to be written. All this is what I shall not permit myself to perform. A life of labour may be a life of pleasure ; but a life of labour without moral consolation or profit is not to be endured. I will betake myself to a country life. There, at least, I shall behold the rising and setting of the sun, feel the invigorating breath of the earth, and, as Lord Bacon would say, feel “ the spirit of the universe ” on my temples. You, my dear friend, will not, perhaps, be able to see the wisdom of all this. You are employed, and of extensive connexions ; you, therefore, can enjoy all that a large city affords. I, too, could wish to live in a vast city, like Paris, Rome, and London, to enjoy the community of enlarged minds ; but the means are wanting ; and in returning to the country, I do but return to my home :—

‘ Here rich with harvests, and there white with flocks.’

‘ I shall hold intercourse with the world by means of letters, journals, and books ; and what is more, I shall hold communion with man in his connexion with the universe : do not, therefore, regard me as lost to the world, but as one who chooses the lesser of two evils. I know enough of mankind to wish them well, and

‘ keep at a distance. Do I not know, that the hamster
 ‘ breaks the wing of its victim before it seizes on any
 ‘ other part; and am I not equally conscious, that,
 ‘ ninety times out of a hundred, fame is nothing more
 ‘ than the breath of blockheads? My choice then
 ‘ shall be,

“ To woo lone quiet in her silent walks.”

‘ I am so ashamed of the manner in which fame is
 ‘ sought, granted, and conquered, that I shall willingly
 ‘ consent to sleep with the dead. I can never cease to
 ‘ remember, that, for a multitude of years, not only
 ‘ Milton, but Bacon and Newton, were much less
 ‘ known and appreciated at home than abroad.’

For us;—we had once so much to encounter from those who lived near us, and thought us too proud to mix with them,—not proud, but disinclining,—that we resolved to live by ourselves. The greatest of our happiness has been this result. We have never been compelled to associate with those we despised or disliked. No weary moments have ensued from this. The quietude without, however, has not always been emblematical of the quietude within.

CCXIV.

WHO BUBBLE THEMSELVES.

‘ Go, thou perfidious, false, dissembling queen;
 As thou deceiv’st the world, so do I thee.’

Schiller; Mary Stuart; Saloin.

CLAUDE and Angelo, having been occupied in blowing bladders half the morning, reminded me that Newton

began his inquiries on colours by examining soap bubbles ; ascribing their diversity of colours to the difference in the thickness of the sides of the bubbles, which perform the office of a prism*.

Communities, as well as individuals, are perpetually bubbling themselves ; all the while esteeming themselves the wisest of men ; and I cannot help thinking the members of the Constituent Assembly of France to have been guilty of this folly. Not when they declared themselves ineligible to be ministers of the crown until two years had elapsed after their sitting as legislators ; but when they voted their own incapability of being elected members of that National Council, which should succeed the Constituent Assembly. The evils that ensued who does not know ?

Were a murderer, pursued by officers of justice, to enter my house and solicit protection, am I not bound to deliver him up ? He, who disdains the law, must suffer by the law. He cannot be permitted to take it up, and set it down, just as he pleases. Placing himself, then, under the protection of the Bellerophon, what right had Napoleon to suppose, that he could be esteemed in any other light than as an enemy or as a public nuisance ? By the invasion of France he had, voluntarily, placed himself out of the law of nations. He seems to have thought that he alone was privileged to say,—‘ Wherever I place my foot, *hic domus, hæc patria.*’

He attempted to justify his invasion on the ground,

* For M. Gogroire's opinion, see *Mémoire sur les Couleurs des bulles de savon.*

that scarcely one of the articles of the treaty of Fontainebleau, guaranteed by Austria, Russia, Prussia, and France, by the signatures of Metternich, Nesselrode, Hardenberg, and Talleyrand, had been observed; and yet he frankly acknowledged to the Count Las Cases, that, on signing that treaty, he had chosen Elba, because it was a spot, whence he could take advantage of any mistakes that might be committed; and whence he could easily return to France, should circumstances permit!

The probability of this invasion I foretold many months before it happened; and I did so on the ground of a very small, but, I think, very significant circumstance: viz., on being informed, that Napoleon had taken for his crest an eagle, *with its head under its wing.*

Being still an emperor, he had a right to an eagle for his crest; but taking that, with its head under its wing, was tacitly telling the world in general, and his partisans in particular, that his title to France was not dead, but sleeping.

Men often fall from the eminence to which they have climbed, by the same errors of principle by which they climbed; and the most effectual way to be bubbled, as it is significantly called, is to believe ourselves beyond the reach of imposition.

Being, a short time since, at Cambridge, a gentleman, in the coffee-room at the Rose Inn, read me the following quotation he had made from a book he had been reading the day before:—‘Men are, every jot, as easily imposed upon as birds, beasts, or fishes; while the

‘eagerness of our appetites suspends the exercise of our reason: a treat, a woman, or a bottle, being the same thing to us, that a worm, a gudgeon, a grain of corn, or a piece of flesh is to those animals. We snap at the bait without ever dreaming of the hook, the trap, or the snare, that goes along with it.’

Who is so wise as never to have done this? Who so unwise as never to confess it?

CCXV.

MEN OF ARTIFICE, ETC.

THE Genoese are given to trick; the Spaniards to artifice; Frenchmen to finesse; and the Italians to stratagem; but a Chinese, they say, can only be cheated by a Chinese:—

‘Yet these are they, the world pronounce as wise!’

One man alludes; a second refers; a third suggests; a fourth hints. One will affect; another will pretend; others assume. This desires to appear better than he is; and builds on imitating manners, vices, and sometimes virtues. This pretends to what is above his reach, his capacity, or his condition.

‘By nought their prudence, but in getting known,
And all their courage in deceiving shown.’

One man exclaims, as it were, to all mankind,—‘Ye are knaves!’ another,—‘Ye are fools*!’ What are these but superficial knaves and fools themselves?

* Vide Rousseau’s reasoning upon this. *Emilius*, vol. ii., p. 73.

‘ In vain the shallow streamlet flows
Its sandy bed to hide ;
The clear, transparent bosom shows
Each weed beneath the tide *.’

Knaves? They are often,—fortunately often,—betrayed, not only by their own associates, but even by their own wishes and maxims.

CCXVI.

WHO DESPISE THOSE THAT PAVE THE WAY.

It is common to despise our masters. When we have been put into the way, already paved and lighted, who can fail to find the end of his journey? ‘ Your highness,’ said Columbus, ‘ may believe me, that the earth is far from being so large as the vulgar admit. I was seven years at your royal court, and during seven years was told that my enterprize was a folly. Now, that I have opened the way, tailors and shoemakers ask the privilege of going to discover new lands.’

Tailors and shoemakers may justly ask leave to go in search of new lands; all we desire of them is, not to calumniate or despise those, who have pointed out to them the quarter of the world, where the new lands lie.

* Metastasio ; Artaxerxes ; Hoole.

CCXVII.

WHO CAN RULE A STATE, BUT NOT A HOUSE.

GROTIUS lays it down as a rule, in his political maxims, that no one can rule a kingdom who cannot manage a province; nor a province, unless he can order a city: nor a city, unless he can regulate a village; nor a village, if he cannot guide a family; nor even a family, unless he can govern himself.

That men, however, can govern states, and yet not govern their own families, is very certain; and we may give for examples, Augustus, Marcus Antoninus, Charlemagne; nay, a multitude of both kings and ministers.

CCXVIII.

CITIZENS OF THE WORLD.

‘*Et consilio, et voce, et etiam vultu.*’

THE Marquis la Fayette wrote thus to a friend* :—
 ‘ May every popular speaker and writer have a mind
 ‘ fixed with a pure love of freedom, disentangled from
 ‘ every personal motive, either of vanity or ambition;
 ‘ wholly devoted to the rights and happiness of man-
 ‘ kind.’

A patriot, as the name implies, thinks only of his country; a true citizen of the world is of no country. He regards mankind in the mass; thinks only of man, not of particular men, or of particular communities of men. All to him are sons or daughters, brothers,

* Thavaniac, Dec. 10, 1791.

sisters, or neighbours. Patriotism, in his view, constitutes but a segment of morality:—the circle he embraces being the whole of human shape, savage, barbarous, semi-barbarous, civilized, and enlightened. The diameter of his circle has no limit but that of the globe.

But who has this unlimited sphere of action? He may ardently desire; but desire evaporates into mere philanthropical phantoms, unless it can be called into action. Patriotism, then, is necessary to afford to philanthropy the opportunities of exercise she desires.

And here Experience steps in with her melancholy lesson. ‘The great majority of those, who call themselves Citizens of the World,’ says she, ‘are men, who care for themselves a vast deal; for mankind little; for their country nothing at all.’

CCXIX.

WHO ARE GOVERNED BY GENERAL MAXIMS.

GENERAL maxims are wise when actors pay a proper regard to individual exceptions; otherwise they are pernicious.

Mr. Burke gives an example of the danger of being governed by general maxims in the person of Lord Chatham. ‘For a wise man he seemed to me to be governed too much by general maxims. One or two of these maxims, flowing from an opinion not the most indulgent to our unhappy species, led him into measures that were greatly mischievous to himself,

‘ and for that reason, among others, perhaps fatal to his country.’

Maxims are fitted only for times. Change the spirit of an age; and you must adopt a new general maxim. The difficulty then consists chiefly in the application. A maxim, suited to the age of Stephen, would ill apply to the present; and those which apply to the present will ensure very different results, should they be applied to an age two hundred years to come. We must not confound *general* maxims with *immutable* ones.

CCXX.

LOVERS OF ADVENTURE.

CANOVA’s Dædalus and Icarus, wherein the father is fastening wings on the shoulders of his son, is the personification of an adventurous spirit.

Some men despise obtaining even common ends by common means. Others like a leaf or a feather in a whirlwind, or a hare, whose head lies

————— ‘ Couch’d close betwixt her hairy feet,
In act to spring away,’

unite a love of fame to a love of adventure;

‘ Traverse huge forests, and unharbour’d heaths,
Infamous hills and sandy perilous wilds,

unsatiated, unwearied.

‘ My inclinations,’ wrote Sir Isaac Newton to Mr. Locke *, ‘ are to sit still.’ These, on the contrary, are

* Camb., Feb. 16, 1691-2.

ever on the wing; and astonishing is the zeal which some of them have displayed, especially in Africa and the northern circle; encountering every hazard, whether of famine or of disease, slavery, robbery, cruelty, and death.

A love of adventure is characteristic of most promising boys. Virgil is, therefore, strictly in nature, where he describes the young Ascanius wishing, as he rides along, that a foaming boar or lion would descend from the mountains.

‘Optat apruma, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem *.’

A love of adventure distinguishes most savages; also persons, born in a state of civilization, similar to that in which live the inhabitants of certain Norwegian districts, described by Von Buch. ‘The sea offers them dangers,’ says he †, ‘and frequently great profits; and they everywhere deem it noble and more becoming a man to extort from the waves, amidst storms and tempests, by their courage and skill, what can only be derived from the land through patience, diligence, and constancy.’

The conversation of agreeable adventurers is delightful! The beautiful Carthaginian hangs on the lips of the Dardan; Calypso is breathless while listening to the adventures of Ulysses; and Desdemona ‘devours’ the discourse of Othello. Adventurers, however, too frequently resemble the cherry-tree of Van Diemen’s Land; the stone of which grows not in the inside, as in all others, but on the outside of the fruit.

* Æn. iv. 159.

† Trav. Norway and Lapland, p. 162. 4to.

CCXXI.

WHO HAVE MANY METHODS OF ENSURING SIMILAR
PURPOSES.

THE little auk is so constructed, that it is capable of contracting and of dilating itself according to its own pleasure. This enables it to dive beneath the water, as well as to swim upon its surface. Some men have only one method to accomplish every thing. If thwarted in that, they are paralyzed. Others argue and act after a different manner. ‘This, I infer,’ says Shakspeare, in his play of Henry V.,—

‘That many things, having full reference
To one consent, may work contrariously;
As many arrows, loosed several ways,
Come to one mark; as many ways meet in a town;
As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea;
As many lines close in the dial’s centre;
So many thousand actions, once afoot,
End in one purpose.’

CCXXII.

WHO KNOW HOW TO ESCAPE.

WATER-FOWLS fly into the air at the sight of a man; and dive into the water at the sight of a hawk. Men have no such convenient methods. Foote, however, seems to have had a faculty, not a little enviable: for he had one species of wit, according to Johnson; and that in a very eminent degree—that of escape. ‘You ‘drive him,’ said the moralist, ‘into a corner with both ‘hands; but he’s gone, sir, when you think you have ‘got him, like an animal that jumps over your head.’

It is excellent to know when to yield, and when to rise. But those, who do so, often do it after the fashion of the ladies in France, during the preaching of Conecte against the high cones, which were so prevalent in the fourteenth century. Wherever he preached, the cones disappeared. But the moment he departed out of the towns, the women, 'who had drawn in their horns, 'like snails in a fright,' says Mons. Paradin, 'shot 'them out again as soon as the danger was over.'

CCXXIII.

WHO LOVE TO GO AGAINST THE STREAM.

ON the sea shore: and my eyes directed to a man, rowing against the tide. A passage in Virgil might have risen to my mind, but it did not. It is that in the Georgics, where he says, that all things hasten to decay, as a boatman rowing against the stream; if he relaxes his oars, the tide hurries him immediately down the river.

——— 'Sic omnia fatis
 In pejus ruere, ac retro sublapsa referri;
 Non aliter, quàm qui adverso vix flumine lembum
 Remigiis subigit, si brachia forte remisit,
 Atque illum in præceps pronò rapit alveus amni.'

It is one of the worst results of going against the stream, that we must always be at our oars.

He, who makes it a practice to sail with the stream, may sail more safely than others; but he sails not so honourably; nor does he always get into a safe port: for he must go wherever the stream may chance to

lead ; and that, sometimes, is among sunken rocks, in deep whirlpools, and over thundering cataracts.

CCXXIV.

WHO SWIM AT ONCE.

HUET, bishop of Avranches, gives a remarkable instance of this faculty:—‘ Being, like other boys, accustomed in the hot weather to bathe several times a day,’ says he, ‘ it happened that I ventured into a stream, without first trying its depth, and immediately sunk to the bottom ; when being roused to the utmost exertion by the urgency of the danger, I struggled so hard with my hands and feet, as to raise myself to the surface of the water ; and having thus discovered that I possessed a faculty with which I was before unacquainted, I swam across a deep river on that very day*.’

How many thousand men have been drowned in all parts of the world ! Nine in ten of these might, doubtless, have been saved, had they possessed the force of character here described ; and the remark may be extended to many of the general affairs of life ; since many of them often depend on nothing more than the will.

CCXXV.

WHO ARE EVER GRASPING AT INDEPENDENCE.

PAUSANIAS mentions † a picture in one of the cities of Greece, which delineated Tityus as no longer under-

* Mémoires, vol. i. p. 50.

† Lib. x. c. 29.

going pain; he being entirely wearied out with the severity of uninterrupted punishment. I remembered this when I read, in one of Rousseau's letters * to the Countess de Boufflers, the following passage:—'As long as my feet shall be able to drag me along, I will not be led anywhere by task-masters; and when they shall bear me no longer, I would prefer dying on the spot.'

I, too, have been ever cursed with a love of independence. It has been the source of many trials: yet even now, with all the experience I have had, I would rather live on biscuit and cheese, being my own master, than on burgundy and venison, to endure the caprice of another. I would almost prefer living in caverns within the bowels of the earth!

'My mind to me an empire is!'

and I thank God, that it is so. Had it been otherwise, I had—long ago!—slept with my fathers.'

Fortunate, perhaps, had it been, had Nature produced for our use a fluid of an agreeable flavour; a food, growing in the fields, of an agreeable taste; clothed us with the fur of the ermine, or the down of the swan; so that all our anxieties should have merely a reference to the increase of enjoyment; none whatever to objects of absolute necessity. How many cares, how many tears, how many crimes, had been spared!

* *Motiers Travers*. Aug. 20, 1762.

CCXXVI.

WHO ACCOMMODATE THEMSELVES EASILY TO ILL
FORTUNE.

No one ever accommodated himself more easily to ill fortune and to good fortune than Charles II. He was so courteous, that it seemed, at all times, difficult for him to guard against relapsing into a subject. Indeed, most of his faults, and many of his vices, arose out of this ease and indolence of temper. Hence the Duke of Buckingham declared, that he might do well if he would. Lord Rochester having said of him, that he never uttered a foolish thing or did a wise one; 'it is all true,' answered his Majesty to the courtier who reported this sally; 'but the reason is obvious; my deeds are my ministers'; my speech is my own.'

It was a shrewd saying of the Duchess of Burgundy to Madame de Maintenon, and not inapplicable to the reign of this prince, that in England queens governed better than kings, because, under kings, women are accustomed to govern; under queens,—men. Charles could not only accommodate himself to all persons, but almost to all circumstances; and, perhaps, he was quite as happy in his exile as he was afterwards on his throne.

CCXXVII.

WHO HAVE HEARTY, YET DECEPTIVE, MANNERS.

SUPPOSE we compare the characters of Lord Townsend and Sir Robert Walpole. If we take Chesterfield,

who knew them both, for our guide, we cannot be much mistaken.

The manners of Lord Townsend were rustic, coarse, and apparently brutal; yet to both his wives he was a kind husband; he was, also, an indulgent father, and a benevolent master.

Walpole was, also, a kind husband, an indulgent father, and a good master. But we must not stop there. He had a hearty frankness of manner, nearly allied to impudence, which made men believe that he had let them into his secrets. An impoliteness of manner attested his sincerity. But nothing could be more really deceptive than all this. He let no one into his secrets. But he would make a small secret, impart it in a half whisper, and then smile in his sleeve, at the pride and exultation of heart he had engendered in the listener. Oh, man!—thou shalt verily have thy reward!

CCXXVIII.

MEN OF GUILF AND SUSPICION.

WITH those, who are combinations, as it were, of shrewd but false conclusions, it is almost necessary for almost all others to measure their looks, and place locks upon their hearts. It is, nevertheless, certain, that the surest method of action, even with these, is to preserve the dignity of justice and truth. The excess of distrust is peculiar to weak minds; the least suspicious being best informed.

I would say something of guile; but Shakspeare

having sketched her figure at full-length, who shall presume afterwards ?

‘ She throws her eyes about the painted round,
 And whom she finds forlorn, she doth lament.
 At last she sees a wretched image bound,
 That piteous looks to Phrygian shepherds lent ;
 His face, though full of cares, yet show’d content.
 Onward to Troy with these blunt swains he goes :
 So wild, that Patience seems to scorn his woes.
 In him the painter labour’d with his skill,
 To hide deceit, and give the harmless show ;
 An humble gait, calm looks, eyes waiting still,
 A brow unbent, that seemed to welcome woe ;
 Cheeks, neither red nor pale ; but mingled so,
 That blushing red no guilty instance gave,
 Nor ashy pale the fear that false hearts have.’

Tarquin and Lucrece.

This is the fiend, which leads men from labyrinth to labyrinth ; leaving them, at last, in the midst of an avenue, that leads to disappointment and error, mortification and disgrace.

CCXXIX.

WHO ARE TRIED BEYOND THEIR STRENGTH.

IN judging a person, who commits a small theft to save himself or his children from starvation, we should remember the argument of Imogen, when she ate the food she had found in the cave near Milford Haven.

‘ Know, if you kill me for my fault, I should
 Have died, had I not made it.’

Some poor men are tried almost beyond the power of

human nature to support ; yet the law allows little distinction between the deed and the temptation : and while the tempted is destroyed, the tempter is permitted to escape ; to tempt with greater skill, perhaps, and with greater success again.

The best men and the worst seem, often, to resemble two buckets in a well :—

‘ The emptier ever dancing in the air ;
The other down, unseen, and full of water.’

Fortune, however, does sometimes stoop to enter the parlours of the good, and sometimes even the studies of the learned. It is well, when she does so enter ; that is, if the weary and overladen shall feel no cause to exclaim—

———— ‘ The comfort comes too late.
’Tis like a pardon after execution !
That gentle physic, given in time, had cured me ;
But now I’m past all comfort here, but prayers.’

Wise men, fallen into misfortune, often remind me of that beautiful passage, wherein the poet draws Actæon*, after his transformation, as still retaining a sense of his former condition. How many good men are there on this wonderful globe, who would sit down by the way side, and cheerfully yield up their existence to the God who gave it ! Pre-eminently wise was it in Providence to lock the volume of futurity ; for if that were seen,—

* ‘ Me miserum !—dicturus erat :—vox nulla secuta est ;
Ingenuit, vox illa fuit, lacrymæque per ora
Non sua fluxerunt.—“ Mens tantum pristina mansit.”’

Ovid.

‘ The happiest youth,—viewing his progress through,
 What perils past, what crosses to ensue,
 Would shut the book, and sit him down and die.’

Second Part of Henry IV.

Men of this kind require the stimulus of some master spirit; which obtained, they rise, shake off their lethargy, and succeed in their designs. Thus the pacos of Peru are so intimidated by a line to which rags are fastened, that they crowd into a flock, and stand paralyzed; but if one wild lama chances to be among them, that one will spring over the line, and then every pacos follows with alacrity. Sometimes this stimulus may be given by a word, a sentiment, or a distich. ‘ Often,’ writes our friend, Meander, ‘ often have I laid my temples on a stone among the wilds of Finland, Sweden, and Norway, with weariness and disgust, that my fortune should have cast me upon such mind-subduing scenes, rather than among the busy haunts of men:—and often has my soul been refreshed with hope, and cheered with consolation, when I have remembered the lines of Darwin, in reference to the angel’s delivery of St. Peter:—

“ Peter, arise !” with cheering voice he calls,
 And sounds seraphic echo round the walls;
 Locks, bolts, and chains, his potent touch obey,
 And pleased he leads the exulting sage to day.’

Economy of Vegetation, ii. 561.

‘ On remembering this passage, I have started up; pursued my way; and, on one occasion, I remember repeated the following lines from Milton to the companion of my journey; and the whole evening after-

'wards passed in delightful anticipation of the time
'when we should return to our native country, sit by
'our native fire, and recount the perils to which we
'have been exposed.

'If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet,
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley ring.'

CCXXX.

WHO ARE FORTUNATE IN NOTHING.

'Tal ventura desde entonces
Me dexaron los planetas,
Que puede servir de tinto
Segun ha sido de uegra.'

'Since then my planet has look'd on
With such a dark and scowling eye,
My fortune, if my ink were gone,
Might lend my pen as black a dye.'

Quevedo; Wiffen.

So numerous are the windings of the Forth, that every wind that blows is necessary for its navigation.

The sun can never be eclipsed but at the time of a new moon; nor can the moon be eclipsed except when she is at the full. And here it may be remarked, that had Tycho Brahe lived before the time of Copernicus, his system would have been regarded as one step in astronomical advancement; but coming, as it did, after that illustrious philosopher, it must ever be esteemed as one step retrograde.

We may apply these facts to the purposes of life.

‘Time remedies all mischances,’ said the Comte de Bussi; ‘and men die unfortunately only because they do not live long enough. Maréchal d’Estrée, who died rich at a hundred, would have died a beggar had he lived only to eighty.’ If this say anything, it is only applicable to suicides, who die at their own option; for neither gifts nor prayers avail, when the gods are against us.

‘Heu, nihil invitis fas quenquam fidere Divis!’

If strength may be imparted to us in the darkness of sleep, certain it is, also, that lightning may fall upon us in a serene sky.

‘I know thee innocent; I know myself so.

Indeed, we both have been unfortunate;

But sure misfortunes ne’er were faults in love.’

Southern; Isabella.

A Greek writer compares life to the wheels of a chariot. What is downward this moment is uppermost next. Let all men then persevere in a good cause. Some men’s exertions, however,—it cannot be denied,—resemble Penelope’s thread. What is done in the day seems, by some secret magic of malignity, to be unwoven by night. They labour like the spider in the garden, which spends its life in spinning webs, to be dislocated by every wind that breathes. Nothing succeeds with them. Even if they hold an iron jar in their hands, instead of a porcelain one, it seems ready to break in a thousand pieces. Filicaiæ says* that Na-

* ‘Italia! Italia! o tu cui feo la sorte

Dono infelice di bellezza,’ &c.

Poesie Toscane de Vincenzo de Filicaiæ; 1707, fol.

ture shed the bloom of beauty upon Italy ; but, at the same moment, declared the sentence, that her dower should be a solicitude that never dies ; and that it signified little to her, whether she were conqueror or conquered ; for she was destined by Fate to be perpetually enslaved. Is it not thus with some men and some women?—

—————' Condemn'd to toil
Their tedious life, and mourn their purpose blasted
With every fruitless act.'

Assuredly it is !

While we can help ourselves, all will help us. No ghost from Denmark need appear to tell us that. What thinks the world?—Successful? You are of ability :—unsuccessful :—a fool ! Events alone justify or condemn. And yet, who can doubt that some deserve all the ill fortune they appear fated to meet ; reminding us, occasionally, of the apes of Java, which will sit by fires, made by travellers in the woods, till they go out, without possessing the skill to keep the fire alive. Hence we assert that, with these, hope resembles those small patches of white moss which cover the mass of stones, that lie upon the summits of the rocks which rise over the ocean in the neighbourhood of the North Cape. They vegetate to no human purpose !

A complication of small evils :—we may compare them to a multitude of insects in the latitude of the Senegal. They are small, yet nothing long can resist their attacks.

CCXXXI.

LOVERS OF SMALL THINGS.

THERE are men whose virtues resemble the objects, painted by Giulio Clovio;—so small, that their existence and beauty can only be recognised through the medium of a microscope. Some small things, however, are inexpressibly interesting. We may admire great things; but we love little ones. A small horse, a diminutive spaniel, a humming bird, and, in many men's estimation, a little woman, are great objects of taste.

CCXXXII.

WHO DESPISE DETAIL.

WHEN the Duke de Choiseul desired France to possess a powerful marine, Louis XV. would not listen. 'My dear Choiseul,' said his Majesty, 'you are as great a fool as your predecessors. They told me, we must have a marine; but I foresee, and that very plainly, that France will never be able to keep any other marine than that which is painted for her by Vernet.'

In complicated affairs, details are of very great importance; and yet some persons,—and eminent ones too,—think them of little or none. Turgot was of this order. He accepted the ministry of Finance on the condition, that the system of raising annual loans should be discontinued; and that the expenses should be re-

duced, by retrenchment, to the amount of the revenue. He failed ; and that mainly from the neglect of detail, and the idea he entertained, that when a plan is sufficiently extensive to be of general utility, it is stooping too low to conciliate public opinion towards it.

A general may as well suppose that swords, cannon, ball, and powder, are sufficient for the exigencies of a long campaign. In this, Marshal Turenne far exceeded the Prince de Condé*. The latter was indeed totally unacquainted with the means of provisioning an army ; but the former never undertook a single movement in opposition to the commissariat.

Lord Granville seems to have made a curious mistake in his estimate of what is to be expected of a great minister. Projects, plans, and prejudices, so entirely governed his imagination, that the consulting the interests and desires of a people, the conduct of business in parliament,—and of such absurdity the speaker Onslow accused him,—and the method of raising money, even for the execution of his own designs, were subjects far beneath his consideration. He acted like a man, who, being compelled to be at St. Petersburg on a particular day, leaves the whole order and economy of his journey to persons, who have not only never travelled the road, but who have to borrow the money with which to travel.

* Audoin ; *Hist. de l'Administration de la Guerre, &c.*, p. 116.

CCXXXIII.

WHO DEVIATE WIDELY AFTER THE FIRST DEVIATION.

As the juices of some funguses change from yellow to dark, green or blue, on being exposed to the air, so do the dispositions of men, but too often, change on being exposed to the vicissitudes of the world. Hence many persons, honourable at the outset, become exceedingly depraved after their first deviation from virtue; reminding us therein of the great African eagle, which, when first caught, refuses all food; but, when once it begins to eat, preserves no measure in voraciousness.

CCXXXIV.

WHOSE DEFECTS ARE USEFUL.

————— ' Full oft 'tis seen
Our mean secures us; and our mere defects
Prove our commodities.'—*Lear*, act iv. sc. 1.

HENCE the lasting influence of a despotism; and hence the apparent solecism of the assertion, that the very defects of a constitution may contribute to its preservation. If it is beyond all price to know the measure of our deficiencies, it is still more desirable to know in what manner to correct them. 'I have declared 'more than once,' says Bayle, in allusion to the Guises of France, 'that all things have their uses in a government. Hence the ingratitude of men of high distinction, their little fidelity, their indolence, and a

‘ hundred other defects, are, sometimes, of greater
‘ advantage to the public than their opposite virtues.’

There can be no doubt, but that there are men whose very defects are useful. For instance,—the want of military acquirements in a prince, too powerful in another way for a rival to insult : for then he desires not to signalize himself in war. Yet this is not a never-failing result ; and we might instance sovereigns, who have been as much devoted to war, as if they had possessed the genius of Frederic, or Gustavus, or Charles the Twelfth.

Happy are those, who are

‘ Graced by defect, and strengthen’d by decay.’

CCXXXV.

WHO ARE EVERY THING BY TURNS AND NOTHING LONG.

To this subject there is a passage applicable in Metastasio’s Dream of Scipio :—

‘ Unstable as the wind am I,
With looks that change, and feet that fly ;
With anger now I burn ; and now
The smiles of pleasure smooth my brow.
Sometimes I take delight awhile
To raise from earth the ruin’d pile ;
And soon an equal zeal employ
My recent labour to destroy.’

Rousseau * compares a man, animated by the charms of universal knowledge, and flying from one science to another, to a child gathering shells on the

* *Emilius*, ii. p. 105.

sea-shore. Baron de Grimm*, however, insists, that even the whims of a statesman of an enterprising genius have a character of grandeur, which often secrete germs of the most useful and important revolutions.

Some vacillate so skilfully, that they resemble ever-greens, which change their leaves every year; but, not doing so all at the same time, they are said never to change. Others we may compare to the *crested grebe*, and some even to the *nylgau*. The *grebe*, according to its passion of anger or of pleasure, raises, or lets fall, the feathers of its crest; the *nylgau*, though exceedingly vicious in a wild state, is equally affectionate in a tame one.

When men change from bad to good, all is well; and they may be said to resemble the *lizards of Carolina*, which change, according to the temperature, from a dull brown to a most brilliant green; but we must ever despise such persons as Charles, the second Duke of Buckingham, if it be true, as Hume says it is, that ‘the least interest could make him abandon his honour; the least pleasure could seduce him from his interest; and the most frivolous caprice was sufficient to counterbalance his pleasure.’ The Duke of Wharnton, also, was of a kindred genius.

Some species of the *orchard oriole* † of North America change their colour progressively, and some periodically; insomuch, that Wilson, the ornithologist, assures us ‡ that, unless a naturalist resides many years in the country they inhabit, and has examined them in

* Mem., i. 281.

† Oriolus mutatus.

‡ Vol. i. 64.

every appearance, he would take the same to be two or three different birds.

The *oliva* of the bay of Logoa, also, changes its plumage several times, and is scarcely to be recognised as the same bird at every change. Many animals in northern latitudes, too, change their colour during the continuance of the snow. Such, also, is our friend, or rather acquaintance, Marcella.

‘ Dip in the rainbow, trick her off in air,
Choose a firm cloud before it fall, and in it
Catch, ere she change, the Cynthia of the minute.

Some flowers assume many changes, and that in a very short period of time. Thus those of the *mutable rose* expand but for one day; during which period they change from white to a deep red, and, as they decay, rapidly change into purple. The *Conferva polymorpha*, also, changes its colour from red to brown, and then to black; and losing its lower leaves, and elongating some of its upper ones, it is frequently mistaken for separate plants.

Many men, in the same way, are ever changing their characters; constant only in being changeable. They do not, however, possess quite the powers, which Virgil gives to Proteus:—

‘ Omnia transformat sese in miracula rerum.’—*Georg.*, iv.

There is magnetism, as it were, in goodness, and there is an equal one in evil. ‘ I am not the rose,’ says the Indian proverb, ‘ but I have lived with the ‘ rose.’ ‘ I am not the night-shade,’ some might also exclaim, if they had but the courage, ‘ but I have sat ‘ with the night-shade.’

We can never be certain what men will do; for they are, frequently, not only ignorant of their own interests, but they act contrary even to their own natures. Thus was it with Byron. 'If ever he was truly himself,' we are told, 'it was when he was theoretically decrying 'the opinions which he really entertained, or practically belying the virtues to which he was naturally inclined*.' 'He was never two days alike,' says Lady Blessington. 'The day after he had awakened 'the deepest interest, his manner of scoffing at himself 'and others destroyed it; and we felt as if we had been 'duped into a sympathy only to be laughed at.'

CCXXXVI.

WHO ARE EASILY RUINED.

A NEIGHBOUR of ours keeps a multitude of pigeons; and, of a fine day, to see them flying beneath the clouds, now turning their blue backs, and now exposing their white fronts, so free and yet so orderly, it is delightful to watch them in their 'whirling flights.' They remind us often of a few unfortunate passenger-pigeons, that, during a fire we saw in Drury Lane (London), *would*, as it were, be ruined: for they flew round and round the house to which they were attached; and it was with great difficulty that their owner, with a long pole, could keep them out of the flames. How many men and women do we all know of the same unfortunate cast! They *will* be ruined:—like moths in the candle, of a fine summer's evening.

* Critical Notice.

Some, like moist plants rooted up, are soon lost: others resemble charcoal, which nothing but fire can decompose and consume. Throw the latter into the sea; they rise, and swim safely to the shore. The former, like glass, crack, break, and fall to pieces at the touch, as it were, of an infant, sleeping in a cradle. It is certain, however, that there are persons to whom even a throne would prove no benefit.

‘ When all the broad expansion, bright with day,
Glow with th’ autumnal or the summer ray,
The summer and the autumn glow in vain,
The sky for ever lours, for ever clouds remain.’

Odyssey, xii. 91.

CCXXXVII.

WHO SUCCEED AGAINST APPARENT IMPOSSIBILITIES.

ACCIIUS NAVIUS, the augur, as an answer to Tarquin, who derided his art, cut a whetstone entirely through with a razor. Thus Livy informs us*; but he does not state, at the same time, that, most probably, the whetstone had been softened by some chemical process.

Success, with some, appears as if commanded to their wishes by some invisible hand; like that recorded in the Castle of Indolence:—

‘ They did but wish, and, instantly obey’d,
Fair ranged the dishes rose, and thick the glasses play’d†.’

Quintilian observes ‡, as the fruit of his experience,

* Lib. i. 36.

† St. xxxiv.

‡ Instit., ii. 12.

that it occasionally happens that great things are accomplished by men, who strive at what is utterly above their power.

‘Tis a many-colour’d man ;
Apt in fancy, quick in plan ;
Making way, where others see
Stern impossibility.’

Aristophanes ; The Demagogues ; Mitchell.

Persons of this order contradict experience, as well as the whole process of human affairs.

CCXXXVIII.

WHO NEVER KNOW THE REASON OF THINGS TILL THE
TIME FOR ACTION IS PAST.

Of this order was Jean Jacques Rousseau. He had no power of right action during first impressions. Two years, as it were, must elapse before he knew the meanings or bearings of the simplest thing. Hence, he was for ever giving false colourings to other men’s motives and actions ; throwing a veil, as it were, and looking through as in a mist at objects, which, to others, were as clear as the sun at noonday in the latitude of Peru.

CCXXXIX.

WHO DO EVERY THING IN A ROUND-ABOUT SORT OF
WAY.

‘ Downwards to climb, and backwards to advance.’

RICHARDSON has truly remarked, that many persons will not do even right things but in a wrong manner.

Thousands there are, who can never walk in a straight line. Let them do what they will, they must do it in a round-about sort of way. Of this, in one respect, we may accuse Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester. For, after proving that the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments is necessary to the well-being of civil society, and that all the wise and learned nations of antiquity concurred in so thinking, he entered with great hardihood into an immense line of argument (in his 'Divine Legation of Moses,' demonstrated on the principles of a religious deist), to prove, that the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments is not only not to be found in, and did not make any part of, the Mosaic dispensation; but that that very omission was, in itself, a decisive proof of its truth!

This round-about method reminds one of what Lord Clarendon says of Archbishop Laud: viz. that, as he so was assured in his own mind that he did nothing but what was pious and just, he never gave a moment's consideration as to the method. 'He thought, perhaps,' continues his Lordship, 'that any art or industry, that way, would discredit, at least make the integrity of the end suspected, let the course be what it might.' And, perhaps, this was not only a plausible reason, but the true one; though, it must be confessed, it does not appear to be quite so natural as it ought to be.

CCXL.

WHO ADOPT UNSUITABLE AMUSEMENTS.

' A heavy gewgaw, call'd a crown, that spread
About his temples, drown'd his narrow head.'

Juvenal, sat. x.—Dryden.

LOUIS XII. was so extremely solicitous in respect to propriety of amusement, that, one day, seeing the judges of the parliament playing at tennis, he assured them publicly, that if he caught them at that game again, he would not only deprive them of their dignities, but give them places in his regiment of guards.

Princes are not always observant of such propriety; especially in their own persons. Thus Commodus,—if, indeed, it is lawful, in this age, to allude to such a person,—was an excellent marksman. He was even more expert than Parthian archers, or Numidian spearmen*. He encountered gladiators, also, seven hundred and thirty-five times; three hundred and sixty-five of which were in the lifetime of his father, Marcus Antoninus †; and yet that father—though an accomplished philosopher—left him the empire!.

Renatus, king of Sicily, was painting the picture of a partridge, when news arrived that Naples was taken by the enemy: yet he never left off. Historians ‡ relate, however, that his subjects loved him, and that they were happy under his care. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, after writing on the best method of administering an empire §, to amuse his leisure, or to gratify his love

* Herodian, lib. i. c. 15.

† Lampridius, c. 11, 12.

‡ Matthieu, &c.

§ De Administratio Imperio.

for splendid expeditions, wrote a large folio volume* on the ceremonials observed in the Constantinopolitan court. Charles IX. wrote a treatise on the art of hunting; including, also, that of curing the diseases of dogs. Louis XIII. occupied himself in making hawks catch small birds, and in inducing those birds, in turn, to catch butterflies †. Louis XV. composed a work on the course of European rivers. ‘No man living,’ wrote Mr. Stanley to Lord Chatham ‡, ‘but Mons. de Choiseul has the talent of entertaining him. The Duke is a person of the most lively and cheerful conversation. He contrives to carry on all his affairs with the least personal trouble or fatigue imaginable to his Majesty; and he has so decided a resolution in every thing, which relates to his own power or influence, that he braves and subdues all those, who would oppose another.’

Louis XVI. translated ‘Gibbon’s History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire’ into French. This is said; but the circumstance may, perhaps, be doubted. Soulavie asserts of this prince, that he had only one passion: viz. that of hunting. On the staircase of Versailles his Majesty had six large frames, detailing the number, species, and quality of the game he had killed when Dauphin, and since he was king, by the year, the month, and the day. But hunting was not the only amusement his Majesty was devoted to. He was equally partial to masonry and locksmithery. ‘These,’ says Madame Campan, ‘so delighted him,

* De Ceremoniis Aulæ Byzantinæ.

† Walton, 88. The kings of Persia, too, often hawked butterflies with sparrows and starlings.—Burton. Anat. Mel. p. 268. fol. patch, Paris. Aug. 20, 1761.

‘ that he admitted into his private apartment a common blacksmith, with whom he made keys and locks ; and his hands, blackened by that sort of work, were often, in my presence, the subject of remonstrance, and even reproaches, from the queen, who would have chosen other amusements for the king.’ His Majesty, also, understood the art of making watches ; and that so well, that Janvier was indebted to him for the first idea of his celebrated timepiece.

Maximilian I., also, loved silver-smithery ; and the Emperor Leopold was a good carver and gilder. These monarchs acted, as if they were stimulated by the spirit of Mahomet, who directed that all kings should learn a mechanical trade as well as their subjects.’

The Prince of Orange, during the time Lord Cherbury knew him, occupied the intervals of military leisure in playing at chess, making love, and riding to Ryswick to see his horses. And this recalls to my recollection what Sir William Temple says of the same prince. ‘ I am engaged to spend this evening,’ says he, in a letter to a friend *, ‘ at Mons. de Witt’s, with the Prince of Orange, where we are all to play the young men, and be as merry as cards and dancing and eating can make us : for I do not think drinking will have any great share. The next day M. de Witt is at leisure, we have a match at tennis.’

The Prince of Orange was an illustrious character ; and, like a powerful bow, required unbending. Pope Clement required the same. ‘ I have been pope and prince all day,’ he was accustomed to say ; ‘ that I

* Hague, Feb. 3, N.S. 1668.

‘ may not be quite suffocated, let me be father Ganga-nelli again *.’

The chateau of the Prince de Condé contained a tennis court, a billiard-room, a swing, and a merry-ground. Nobles once entertained minstrels; they now, but too often, entertain sycophants. Few can live without. And this reminds me of Dante, who, in reply to a Prince of Verona, that it was very extraordinary that noblemen should keep fools, answered, ‘ Not in the least; for similarity of mind has been, in all ages, the basis of friendship.’

Many men’s amusements, as Balzac would say, are neither ‘ honest occupations, nor agreeable exercises.’ Their occupations are destructive, and their exercises pall. If Locke is correct in saying †, that the happiness of men consists in pleasure whether of body or of mind, according to the wish, men of superior rank should imitate Scipio in passing from honest business to innocent recreation, and resemble Priestley in being able to pass from study to amusement, and from amusement to study ‡, ‘ without occasioning any retrograde movement in the train and connexion of thought.’

Bolingbroke has asserted §, and with great truth, that

* A pleasant anecdote of the present Bishop of London (Dr. Blomfield) has been related to me by a friend. Whenever he goes down to Bury St. Edmunds, where he has a multitude of friends who knew him in his boyhood, he uniformly sends his wig out of the room after dinner, and gives himself up to the charms and delights of friendly companionship.

† Lord King’s Life of Locke, p. 115. 4to.

‡ Brande.

§ Patriot King; Works, iv. 121. 4to.

a prince should choose his companions with as much care as his ministers. For the real character of a man, as Sir Joshua Reynolds said to Dr. Johnson *, 'is laid open by his amusements.' 'It is, sir,' returned Johnson: 'for no man is a hypocrite in his pleasures.' And this may serve to remind us also of what Prior wrote to his patron, in allusion to Louis XIV. and the Elector of Bavaria: 'The old monarch, at seventy-five, eats and sleeps at Versailles, as if he were at your age; and seems less concerned about the empire continuing the war, than you can be about the Scots threatening to break the union: and the Elector of Bavaria is at Turenne's, playing at lansquena, and giving balls, with as much satisfaction as if the Ilmersheim were made good, and he in possession of his own palace at Munich.'

All this, however, may be, in no small degree, necessary. For were a monarch compelled to be always on the watch, his responsibilities are so great, that he would soon die, if not of inanition, at least of want of sleep. It is well, therefore, for them sometimes to resemble boys,—

———— 'who whip their tops for sport,
On the smooth pavement of an empty court.'
Dryden; Hind and Panther.

CCXLI.

MIRABEAU.

To give a wound is within the capacity of all; but can they heal the wound they have made, when con-

* Boswell.

science grants them the grace to desire it? This question, proposed by a friend, in reference to Mirabeau, reminds me of what Lord Clarendon says of Lord Say and Sele. 'When he thought there was mischief enough done, he would have stopped the current, and have diverted further fury; but he then found he had only authority and credit to do hurt; none to heal the wounds he had given; and he fell into as much contempt with those whom he had led, as he was with those whom he had undone.' Mirabeau exemplified the former part of this parallel; but he died, fortunately for himself, just in time to escape the consciousness of the latter.

Mirabeau belonged to that class of politicians, who, though capable of performing great services, are equally capable of giving dangerous advice. As a proof of this we may refer to his having advised the king of Prussia to place his treasure in foreign funds. Mirabeau seems to have forgot, that the prince, who trusts a foreign state with his treasure, places himself at the discretion of those who are liable to be honest, no longer than their interest or occasion serves.

Mirabeau was, also, an example to prove, that in times of revolution, the worst men are frequently the most powerful. His influence was unbounded; and yet what a person he really was may be amply judged of from the following extract:—'He had been seventeen times in prison; he had deserted his own, and run away with other men's wives; he had had the most scandalous lawsuits with his own family; had been condemned as a criminal; exiled; and executed in effigy. He had written and published one of the most depraved of

‘ books; had led the most dissipated and obscene of lives; and was known to be a dangerous enemy to those he hated, and an unsure friend to those he pretended to love.’

There are now only two things to be said; he had a wonderful tact in availing himself of other men’s labour and genius; and precisely that species of talent, demanded by the period which called it forth.

Dumont had an intimate knowledge of this singular person; and this is the account he gives of him. He esteemed the word ‘ impossible ’ to be foolish: all things being, in his estimation, possible. ‘ Never use that foolish word again in my presence,’ said he to his secretary. He is said to have had so great an insight into human character, that he detected every shade in a moment. He could perceive every real or apparent contradiction at a glance; and had so singular a faculty of discovering obscure talents, that he could apply to each ‘ the degree of encouragement necessary to its peculiar character; and of animating those, who possessed them, with his own zeal, so as to make them eagerly co-operate in a work of which he was to reap all the credit.’ Knowing mankind well, ‘ he had, also,’ says Dumont, ‘ invented a language scarcely intelligible to any but himself; and had terms to indicate fractions of talents, qualities, virtues or vices, halves and quarters*.’ As his ambition centered in becoming prime minister of France, according to Bertrand de Moleville, he wished a monarchy; and had he been made minister, he would have rendered it despotic.

* Dumont’s Recollections of Mirabeau, pp. 106, 223, 238, 256,

Not a little, also, may be known of this extraordinary man from the following passages:—‘ A submission to a constitution is not the less sincere and true, because we do not approve all the articles of it. I swear to pay tribute to Cæsar; but I do not swear that Cæsar is right in demanding of me that which he exacts.’ His extraordinary art may be amply appreciated from a passage in a letter he wrote to the king:—‘ Secure the true rights of the nation, especially its liberty, and you will not want zealous servants to defend the interests of your crown, and those of your sacred person. From this instant I thoroughly devote myself to your Majesty’s service; but I intreat you never to judge of my sentiments or intentions by the opinions of the moment, which I shall often be obliged to support in order to preserve a popularity, of which I ought to be careful for the interest of the King, and which I am anxious to render serviceable to him alone. The same motive may also sometimes compel me to oppose your desires, but I beseech your Majesty to deign to confide in my fidelity; it is not to be shaken, and I dare promise you, that in one year from this time, the royal authority shall be firmly re-established on its true basis, and to such a degree as shall enable the King always to do freely the good, his heart desires.’

I shall now combine, in a few sentences, the opinions of M. de Montmorin, M. Malonet, and M. de Moleville; also those of a critic of our own country, in regard to the nature of what may be called his virtues.

He was possessed of very rare qualities; but they were the most fatal when not the most valuable; with

sufficient energy, ambition, and more talents than were necessary to fill, with great eminence, the highest offices of the state*. He was master of all styles, and fit to act all characters. He was not only not to be stopped by any difficulty, but able to find means to extract advantage from all that occurred †. ‘The popularity I wish,’ said he to the Côté-Droit, ‘and of which I have had the honour to enjoy my share, is not a feeble reed, but an oak, whose roots I would have shot far into the ground; that is to say, into the firm basis of the principles of reason, justice, and liberty.’

In spite of this, his practice but too fatally justified the assertion, that his love of liberty consisted in a desire, not of raising to his own level those who were below it, but in lowering those who were above it. When the ranks, dignities, and powers, which had been the objects of his ambition, or of his envy, were annihilated, he, therefore, ceased to be a democrat ‡. There was in Mirabeau nothing that deserved the name of virtue; but that imperfect substitute for it which is found in many superior minds; viz. § ‘a sensibility to the beautiful and good, which sometimes amounted to sincere enthusiasm; and which, mingled with the desire of admiration, sometimes gave to his character a lustre resembling the lustre of true goodness, as “the fatal splendour,” which lingered round the fallen archangel, resembled the exceeding brightness of those spirits who had kept their first estate ||.’

* Montmorin. † Malonet. ‡ Moleville.

§ Edinb. Rev, No. cx. p. 547.

|| The eloquence of this remarkable person has been thus cha-

CCXLII.

THE REGENT DUKE OF ORLEANS.

THE Duke knew the world well. He was accustomed to say,—‘*Quiconque est sans honneur, et sans humeur, est un courtisan parfait.*’

We are told by Helvetius, that when he questioned a foreign gentleman, who had been introduced to him in respect to the genius of the several nations of Europe, the foreigner answered,—‘The only way, in which I can reply to your Highness, is to repeat the first question, that is most generally asked when a stranger makes his appearance among them. In Spain, they ask, “Is he a grandee of the first quality?” In Germany, “Is he admitted into the chamber?” In France, “Is he respected at court?” In Holland, “How much is he worth?” In England, “What sort of a man is he?”’

These questions are very characteristic; and recall to my recollection several passages in Lord Bolingbroke’s correspondence with the Earl of Peterborough and Lord Raby, when the former was at Venice, and the latter at the Hague. ‘It would be a real and very great misfortune,’ writes he to the Earl of Peter-

acterized:—‘Sudden bursts of inspiration, short sentences, which came like lightning, dazzling, burning, striking down every thing before them; sentences, which, spoke at critical moments, decided the fate of great questions; sentences, which every one knows by heart; in these lay the oratorical power of Chatham and Mirabeau.’—*Macauley.*

borough, 'if I imagined your Lordship had entertained the least doubt of that friendship which I profess to have for you. My habits, at court, have neither taught me to show what I do not feel, nor to hide what I do; and my love and my hate are so far from not appearing in my words and actions, that they generally sit in my very face.' 'There is no manner of heed,' he writes to Lord Raby, 'which your Excellency makes to the account, you give of the detail of the several conferences. These minute circumstances give very great light to the general scope and design of the persons negotiated with. And I own, that nothing pleases me more in that valuable collection of the Cardinal D'Os-sat's Letters, than the naïve descriptions which he gives of the looks, gestures, and even tones of voice of the persons he conferred with.'

In consequence of this letter, Lord Raby (afterwards Earl of Strafford) continued to give Lord Bolingbroke a descriptive account of the looks, gestures, and manners of the various persons, with whom he transacted business; a circumstance which reminds me, every now and then, of the first edition of Drayton's Polyolbion, which was illustrated by maps, in which cities, forests, rivers, and mountains were represented by the figures of men and women.

The plan recommended by, and so agreeable to Lord Bolingbroke, was, also, greatly affected and esteemed by the Regent Duke of Orleans. In him were united splendour of accomplishments; qualities suited to an eminent statesman; military genius; and so great a taste for the arts, that his talents for music and paint-

ing are said even to have surpassed those of professed artists; while his mental resources were increased by a knowledge of various languages.

With all these qualities and capabilities, however, the Duke kept pace with the most profligate of his age in all manner of vicious excesses. In fact, there was never a more curious example of contrasted capability and practice than in him; and he seems to have lived in a perpetual state of internal warfare.

Walpole insists that, previous to the death of Louis the Fourteenth, he had entered into a plot to place the Spanish crown upon his own head; and that he was only saved by his wife and Madame de Maintenon from dying on a scaffold. Yet there are two speeches of his which must always command our admiration. Thus, when about to be appointed Regent, he insisted on receiving the power of pardoning. 'You may tie my hands, gentlemen,' said he to the members of the council, 'from mischief; but I must have them free for good.' The second speech I allude to is this. Some one complained to him of devoting a great deal of money to the maintenance of Stanislaus, who had been driven from the throne of Poland: 'Sir,' answered the Regent, 'the court of France has always been, and will, I hope, always continue to be, an asylum for unfortunate princes; and would you have me violate so honourable an observance, when a prince, so excellent as the King of Poland, comes to claim it?'

CCXLIII.

GREAT MEN HUMBLE.

TILLOTSON lamented, that true humility, plainness, and sincerity of nature, were, in a great degree, lost among us. I marvel at it; for those qualities produce more homage, happiness, and delicious respect than all that art can purchase.

Newton was so plain, modest, and simple, that no one, however illiterate, could perceive that Newton thought himself a greater man than he. The wider the circle his mind embraced, the more humble and devout he was. Buffon and Linnæus were not quite so modest. The former called himself (or I mistake) 'Nature's Secretary.' Linnæus, however, often humbled himself. 'If my names of plants,' he would say, 'displease you, choose others more agreeable to your taste.'

Herodotus of all historians, Virgil of all poets, Raphael of all painters, and Fox of all orators, seem to have understood how much real grandeur springs out of simplicity. Fox, indeed, was the most winningly modest of all statesmen :

—————' On his rugged brow
Sat young simplicity.'

He gave himself up to society with the artlessness of a child. 'Sheridan told me,' said Lord John Townshend, 'that he was quite lost in admiration of Fox on the day they first dined together; and that it was a puzzle to him to say what he admired most;—his command-

'ing superiority of talent and universal knowledge, or
'his playful fancy, artless manners, and benevolence of
'heart, which showed itself in every word he uttered.'

A want of simplicity makes Butler's Analogy much less agreeable, and, therefore, much less effective, than Wollaston's Religion of Nature. Both, however, yield, in point of effect, to Paley's Natural Theology.

No writer,—even a poet,—should cease to remember, that simplicity of expression gives as much lustre to thought, as simplicity of setting gives to pearls and diamonds.

CCXLIV.

GREAT MEN QUACKS.

IN all stations, supported by the public, nothing succeeds so amply and so surely as quackery, judiciously exercised. Even great men resort to it. 'We often feel tempted to say, in these disingenuous days,' says a powerful critic*, 'when we have been in company with any distinguished person,—he is a great man, no doubt; but he is, evidently, a great quack also.'

How many inordinate quacks do politics raise up every day!

Sir Joshua Reynolds knew the effects of quackery well, or he had never set up a carriage with wheels partly carved and gilt, with panels representing the four seasons of the year. This carriage was a species of advertisement.

Quackery, indeed, has become so general and so

* Edinburgh Review, Sept. 1828.

effective, that even Lord Byron felt obliged to resort to it; and Zimmermann went even so far as to define a quack 'a wise man, availing himself of other men's follies*.'

CCXLV.

WHO TAKE CARE NEVER TO EXCEL THEIR MASTERS.

————— ' He has good nature,
And I have good manners;
His sons, too, are civil to me, because
I do not pretend to be wiser than they.'—*Otway*.

If it is a maxim, that we should never engage with one who has nothing to lose, it is equally wise to guard against any desire to out-do our masters. This is a canon strongly inculcated by Graciano, a Spaniard of some shrewdness; and every one, who acts in hostility with this precept, will find, in the end, that he has acted against one essential canon in the courts of prudence and discretion.

Parmenio advised his son Philotes to adopt this policy; and Volumnia said to Coriolanus—' Make thyself less.'

With wise men, if we would rise, we must, if possible, engender a high opinion of ourselves;—with superficial ones, and with mere men of the world, it were more politic to indicate a higher opinion of them. Racine seems to have been alive to this species of worldly policy. ' Do not think,' said he to his son, ' that I am sought after by the great for my dramas. Cor-

* Tissot, p. 28.

‘neille composes much nobler verses than mine; but no one notices him, and he only pleases by the mouths of the actors. I never allude to my works when with men of the world; but I amuse them about matters they like best to hear. My talent with them consists, not in making them feel that I have any, but in showing them that they have.’

It must be confessed, that Racine was no novice in the affairs of life.

CCXLVI.

WHO FIND FAULT WITH BEAUTIES.

SOME critics,—amongst whom we may instance Servius,—censure the following line:—

‘*Sternitur, exanimisque tremens procumbit humi bos.*’

They censure this line because it ends with a monosyllable, which is the very beauty of it; for it makes the sound an echo to the sense.

How many pedants have censured Milton’s introduction of the allegory of Sin and Death into his *Paradise Lost*, because it is an allegory; when the whole poem is nothing less than a tissue of allegories. True critics, however, have had more consideration. ‘I challenge you,’ wrote Atterbury to Pope *, ‘to show me in Homer any thing equal to this allegory, either as to the greatness and justness of the invention, or the height and beauty of the colouring.’ Pope was, doubtless, a critic of the first class.

* Bromley, Nov. 8, 1717.

CCXLVII.

WHO CAN ADORN DRY SUBJECTS.

SAW miniature copies of the Hercules, the Gladiator, the Antinous, the Apollo, and the Medicean Venus. Darwin has immortalized them :—

‘ Hence wearied Hercules in marble rears
 His languid limbs, and rests a thousand years ;
 Still, as he leans, shall young Antinous please
 With careless grace and unaffected ease ;
 Onward with loftier step Apollo spring,
 And launch the unerring arrow from the string ;
 In Beauty’s bashful form, the veil uncurl’d,
 Ideal Venus win the gazing world.’

To adorn dry subjects demands great imaginative powers. The first eminent instance we have, I think, is Lucretius. His *De Rerum Naturâ*, is, indeed, a wonderful example. Quintilian’s *Institutes* are, also, poetical ; and Blackstone’s *Commentaries* would almost gratify a reader of romance. The finest instance in modern times, however, is Darwin, his *Economy of Vegetation*, and his *Temple of Nature*, being, perhaps, unequalled in point of splendour, elicited from what is generally esteemed the driest of subjects. The highest triumph of a poet is, perhaps, exemplified when he succeeds in detaining the soul in a pleasing state of captivity, when describing subjects, which the major part of mankind consider sterile and abortive.

Reading this to a friend, he reminded me of the ‘ *Loves of the Triangles* :’—but I cannot value what I never read.

CCXLVIII.

WHO KEEP FAITH IN LITTLE THINGS IN ORDER TO BETRAY
IN GREAT ONES.

‘Antonio. This Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind.

Bassanio. I like not fair terms, and a villain's mind.’

Merchant of Venice.

TRAVELLERS tell us, that along the road, which winds through the valley of Muotta, in the canton of Schweiz, there are many shops established, in which the articles are ticketed, and left for the inspection of any person that passes by; who, if he choose to purchase, leaves the amount, takes the merchandize, and the owner calls in the evening to take away the money. I believe, no similar instance can be cited; nor do these honest Switzers seem honest in one thing the better to deceive in others.

Plain, blunt men, however, are sometimes as deceptive as smooth, insinuating, ones:—

*‘Harbouring more craft, and more corrupted ends,
Than twenty silly, ducking observants,
That stretch their duties nicely.’*

But these are nothing so deceptive as those, who keep faith in little things, to betray more safely in great ones. Melmoth sketches a character of this kind in that of Mezentius, who, at the time in which he was unjustly keeping a neighbour out of possession of an estate, resigned a post he held under Lord Godolphin, under pretence of indulging the delicacy of his conscience. And yet it seemed to many as if—

‘Twere worse than plotting to suspect his plot.’—Dryden.

There are some engagements, however, which, as they never ought to have been entered into by the fathers, entail no obligations on the sons. Thus Lord Grenville in the House of Lords* :—‘ Great is the importance to every country ; inestimable is the value of Great Britain’s maintaining inviolate its public faith. But no contract is binding whose performance is unlawful. To fulfil such engagements is in itself a disregard and breach of prior and stronger obligations.’ This his Lordship said in regard to the slave-trade. Fathers having countenanced the slave-trade was no reason why the same trade should have been tolerated by the sons. Thank Heaven—the season is past !

CCXLIX.

A CHARACTER IN ANCIENT TIMES.

WE have no character in modern times,—at least I think not,—whom we may associate strictly with the Hippias, mentioned by Plato.

This person appeared at Olympia, and was taken great notice of. He deserved such distinction. At least we may presume so, for he appeared in a dress of his own weaving, a zone of his own embroidery, and buskins of his own cutting out ; the ring on his finger, and the seal he carried in his writing-desk, were, also, of his own engraving. Added to all these, he brought dithyrambics, orations, and tragedies, all of his own composing. And not only these, but three epic poems !

* June 27, 1814.

CCL.

WHAT IS NECESSARY TO A SUCCESSFUL TRAITOR.

SOME men's fortunes resemble the Mardus, a river which rises in the recesses of the Caucasus, flows in a serpentine manner through a multitude of picturesque ravines; and, after forming many cataracts, loses its waters in the Caspian Lake, the waters of which have no outlet.

Thus, the Earl of Manchester, in answer to Cromwell, who advised a particular motion in the field, answered:—'If we meet with a defeat, there is an end to our pretensions. We shall be robbers and traitors; our lands will be forfeited by law; and our heads doomed to the axe.'

Audacity, decision, promptitude, intrigue, and a reckless disposition, are as necessary to a successful traitor, as perspicuity, precision, purity, unity, harmony, and strength are to the combination of a perfect sentence.

Excuse this instance of the bathos, my dear friend, and pass on with as much good-humour as such an anti-climax will allow you to assume.

CCLI.

WHO DO AS THEY LIKE, AND GIVE NO REASON.

ON an eminence, everlooking a beautiful valley in South Wales, commanded by the Brecknockshire bea-

cons, there lived, a few years since, a country gentleman, who, when from home, was an agreeable, gentlemanly person; but the moment he returned in sight of his own village, 'the Devil,' as the poor used to exclaim, 'would jump upon his back;' and on entering his house, if any thing displeased him, he would run after his wife, children, and servants, as if he were out of his senses. But if any one turned again, he would be as quiet and as gentle as an antelope. His favourite maxim was,—
'Do as you like, and give no reason.'

This maxim reminds me of Lord Mansfield:—'Always decide,' said he to a newly-appointed governor of Jamaica, who expressed a diffidence in respect to the fulfilment of his duty as chancellor of his province; 'always decide; and give no reason for your decision. You will, no doubt, decide well. But if you give your reasons, you may give bad reasons, or not the best. Therefore decide, and say nothing.'

No judge ever gave, or received, a more convenient lesson of advice than this.

CCLII.

CARDINAL RICHELIEU, CARDINAL OF LORRAINE, AND
CARDINAL MAZARIN.

WHEN Peter the Great saw the mausoleum of Cardinal Richelieu, he exclaimed,—'Here lies a man, to whom I would have yielded one half of my dominions, had he taught me the art of governing the other.'

Barriere's remarks on this celebrated minister are

equally worthy of attention; since there is no small knowledge of human nature implied in them; and they convey more than many much more elaborate pictures. 'While he oppressed the great, he rendered essential services to France; and his genius induced the nation to overlook his despotism. The abasement of Austria, the humiliation of Spain, the violent restoration of order in the state, the honours of literature, and the encouragement of commerce, redeemed, in some degree, the tyrannical acts of which he is justly accused. He imparted to the measures of government something of the loftiness of his own character. Undoubtedly he was feared, but he commanded admiration; and nothing induces men to forgive attacks made upon their rights, unless it be the glory which dazzles them, or the happiness they enjoy.'

Now let us observe what has been said of the Cardinal of Lorraine, especially by Maimbourg. His genius was vivacious and penetrating; his disposition impetuous and vehement; he had a flowing eloquence, and possessed more learning than might have been expected from a man of quality. He was enterprising, and capable of forming great designs; bold and intrepid in the cabinet, but fearful and weak when called upon to execute anything in which danger might be threatened.

Let any one, who has leisure and inclination for the employment, consult the various memoirs, biographies, and histories, connected with the circumstances in which these two cardinals were engaged, and he will



soon be convinced of the vast distance that subsisted between them ; and yet they have been assimilated by some ; the palm being sometimes given to the one, and sometimes to the other. This distance does not, however, appear so much in the quality of their minds, as in the attitudes which they were enabled to permit that quality to assume.

Thomas calls Richelieu a king by his genius ; and he attributes to his counsels the subsequent glory of France.

‘ Un homme en qui l’audace aux talents fut unie,
Sujet par sa naissance, et roi par son génie,
Avoit du nom Français commencé la splendeur,
Et préparé pour moi ce siècle de grandeur ;
Cet homme est Richelieu, ministre despotique,
Profond dans ses desseins, fier dans sa politique, ’ &c.

I think, also, that to Richelieu may be, in some degree, attributed the revolution of France ; for his policy dictated an opinion that France could never enjoy the sweets of peace till the Protestants were deprived, not only of their rights and privileges, but of their ecclesiastical polity *. As to his Political Testament, there can, I should suppose, be no question now as to its authenticity.

Richelieu was greatly indebted to the skill of Father Joseph, the Capuchin, with whom he concerted all his measures. Richelieu was constrained to live in state, and to be surrounded by persons of all orders and conditions. The Capuchin, in the silence and leisure of

* See Mosheim, iv. 65.

his cell, conceived his plans, revised, and perfected them. As a negotiator, says De Bury, he was the ablest in all Europe.

We may know something of Richelieu still more in point. 'I never venture to undertake any thing,' said he to the Marquis de Vieuville, 'till I have considered it thoroughly; but when I have once formed my resolution, I never lose sight of my object. I overturn; I mow down all before me; and then I throw my red cassock over it, and cover all.' In fact, Richelieu resembled the best horses of Persia, as described by Della Valle; lively, light, courageous, and equal to all hardships. Always restless*, nothing soothed or contented him; ambitious; cruel to those who offended him; persevering; careless of luxury and convenience; with great discernment, yet revelling in a success not always owing either to prudence or to vigour. Prodigal of the national resources, yet parsimonious of his own: he was inferior, in this respect, to the Spanish minister, the Duke d'Olivarez, who was lavish of his own property, and frugal of that belonging to the state. The suspicions and intrigues of the latter, too, never thinned the court to populate the prisons; nor was the charge of treason characteristic of his administration to gratify his revenge.

We might here say a few words in respect to Richelieu's rival, Cardinal Mazarin; first quoting a distich from Algernon Sydney:—

'Magnus uterque fuit; dignos sed vindice nodos
Richelius secuit, Julius explicuit.'

* De Caylus; Servan; Anguetil; Voiture.

To which may be added a well-pointed couplet from the French :—

‘ RICHELIEU, grand, sublime, implacable ennemi ;
MAZARIN, souple, adroit, et dangereux ami *.’

There was some truth in the poet’s assertion, that though Richelieu had too great an authority over his master, he made his master the master of kings †.

It was Mazarin’s policy to soften, to subdue, to corrupt, and to ruin the French nobility of his time. The instrument, he employed, was luxury. He desired to render them unequal even to the Ursini, Colonna, and Savelli of Italy ; all of whom bartered the vigour and virtue of their ancestors for pride ‡, sensuality, and indolence.

Had the Cardinal succeeded to his desire, the palaces of France had witnessed the picture Voltaire has given in his description of the famine :

‘ On vit avec effroi tous est voluptueux,
Pâles, défigurés, et la mort dans les yeux,
Périssant de misère au sein de l’opulence,
Detester de leurs biens l’inutile abondance.’

Henriade, chant x.

Cardinal de Retz gives a curious picture of Mazarin’s manners and influence. ‘ Every one,’ says he §, ‘ had

* ‘ In secundis insolentius se gessit Richelius, in adversis con-
stantius ; Mazarinus in secundis moderatius, in adversis timidius.’
—*Comparatio Card. Richl. et Mazarin.* 12.

† ‘ Il fut trop absolu sur esprit de son maistre,
Mais son maistre par luy sut le maistre des roys.’

‡ Vide Sydney Papers, ii. 705.

§ Mem., i. 34.

‘ free access to him, and was heard with all the ease possible. They dined at his table as at a private gentleman’s. In short, he got over every body’s head at a time, that every body imagined they walked by his side.’

CCLIII.

WHO CAN GOVERN THEMSELVES.

THIS is the first of masteries.

— ‘ He who reigns within himself, and rules
 Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king ;
 Which every wise and virtuous man attains ;
 And who attains not ill aspires to rule
 Cities of men, or headstrong multitudes,
 Subjects himself to anarchy within,
 Or lawless passions in him, which he serves.’

Milton ; Paradise Regained.

Servants govern their passions better than their masters. Their patience and forbearance under reproach and anger is, indeed, wonderful. We all see astonishing instances.

Poor men live with each other in a state of equality. While they remain so, they do not often presume to be dictatorial with each other. But, from the moment in which they become masters, their habits and manners undergo so great a change, that the worst of overseers would, perhaps, be a man who had himself once been in danger of receiving parochial relief.

CCLIV.

WHO DETEST OPPOSITION.

DR. PARR and Warburton (Bishop of Gloucester) seem to have resembled, in some measure, the Cleon of ancient times; for Cleon is described as having been boisterous, vehement in utterance, rash, arrogant, of violent gesture, obstinate, and contentious. But they differed from him in this; viz., that, though they required unconditional submission, they were both placable to prostrate enemies and repentant antagonists; and then 'glowing with kindly feelings.' Both, however, carried their hatred of opposition to a very extravagant height.

Louis XI. hated opposition almost as much; but he differed, in this part of his character, from most men*; for he never took offence at any declared opposition, if he thought he discovered the motive for it to arise either out of interest or a principle of justice.

Men of noble minds thrive by opposition:—

————— 'E'en the oak
 Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm.
 He seems indignant, and to feel
 Th' impression of the blast with proud disdain,
 Frowning, as if in his unconscious arm
 He held the thunder; but the monarch owes
 His firm stability to what he scorns;
 More fix'd below, the more disturb'd above.'—*Cowper*.

Most men of rank and consideration, however, have

* Boulainvillers, ii. 236.

a vehement dislike even to the shadow of opposition. They encounter it but seldom ; and are therefore unused to it. Other persons hate it equally, but, meeting with it often, they learn to endure it. ‘ No, sir,’ said Johnson ; ‘ great lords and great ladies do not love to have ‘ their mouths stopped.’ ‘ For my part,’ answered Boswell, ‘ I am happy to hear you, beyond what I can ‘ express.’ ‘ Yes, sir,’ returned the lexicographer ; ‘ but if you were Lord Chancellor, it would not be so : ‘ you would then consider your dignity.’


CCLV.

WHO FORESEE NATURAL RESULTS.

IN the seeds of the tulip-tree may be seen the leaves of the future tree ; and in the buds of the hepatica we may behold, a year before the time of expansion, a perfect plant of the future.

How many thousand persons are there even in what is called civilized societies, who see it rain, hail, and snow, feel the winds, and hear the thunder, and yet know no more, and care no more, in respect to the causes of those phenomena, than the beasts that roar in the desert, or the kine that graze in the woods. There are some, however, who behold these effects with wonder and delight ; and even venture so far into the regions of Nature as to foretel consequences, unimagined by any but themselves.

Seneca appears to have predicted that another world must necessarily exist beyond the Atlantic. Julian



predicted, that comets had periodical returns ; Galileo foresaw, that the phases of Venus would, one day, be found to vary ; and Columbus imagined the existence of a new route to the eastern part of the old world.

Newton predicted that the diamond would be found to be an inflammable substance ; Leibnitz foretold the necessary existence of the polypus ; and Franklin imagined, and afterwards proved, the identity of lightning with the electric fluid.

Darwin predicts a period, when the tract of land on the west of the gulf of Mexico may be worn away, the current of the gulf stream cease, and all the West India islands, by the subsiding of the waters, be united into one, or joined to the continent. Certain it is, that the corallina work so incessantly in the Pacific, that it may not require a multitude of ages to form a series of continents in the vast area of that sea.

CCLVI.

WHO LOVE TO SEE THE PROGRESS OF THINGS.

THE four lines in Thomson's tale of Palemon and Lavinia did not stand thus in the original edition :—

' The fields, the master, all, my fair, are thine,
If to the various blessings, which thy house
On me has lavish'd, thou that bliss will add,
That sweetest bliss,—the power of blessing thee.'

In the first edition we read thus :—

' With harvest shining, all the fields are thine !
And if my wishes may presume so far,
Their master too, who then indeed were blest,
To make the daughter of Acasto so.'

From a love of seeing the progress of things arises no small part of our pleasure, when examining the various readings in the late editions of Shakspeare, Pope, Akenside, and Gray ; Byron, Crabbe, and Scott.

Great pleasure, too, may be derived from examining early specimens of painting and sculpture ; the tracings of architecture, the dawn of art, and the early ages of history. By this process every thing becomes simple. ‘What I have known,’ says Dr. Priestley, ‘with respect to myself, has tended much to lessen both my admiration and my contempt of others. Could we have entered into the mind of Sir Isaac Newton, and have traced all the steps by which he produced his great works, we might see nothing very extraordinary in the process.’ The truth of this supposition has been lately proved by Dr. Brewster in his perspicuous memoir of that illustrious person.

What pleasure, too, may be derived from watching the course of planets, satellites, and comets ; successive developments in the economy of vegetation ; and, above all, the openings of the mind of man in children, delighted with instruction !

The pleasure arising from the progress of perspectives may even be extended to a future state. ‘I do not imagine,’ says a celebrated writer, far from being remarkable for the indulgence of his imagination, ‘that all things will be made clear to us immediately after death ; but that the ways of Providence will be explained to us very gradually.’ Happy will be the hour, when we shall be able to exclaim, ‘*Italia! Italia!*’

‘*Italia!*’

CCLVII.

WHO ARE ALL DIPLOMACY IN POLITICS.

CAMPANELLA,—whom Prynne called ‘ a second Ma-chiavelli,’—says, in his Discourse touching the Spanish Monarchy*, that the best method the King of Spain could adopt was,—seeing how well the Spaniards were defended by Nature and their own courage,—to cause dissension among their enemies, and be diligent to keep it up. Cardinal Fleury was not unalive to this. He neglected the French marine; he neglected, also, the French military power; his policy being pacific. But he was still alive to French interests, and he endeavoured to secure them; not by fleets or by armies, but by dividing foreign courts, raising hopes, and fomenting intrigues.

The French had long been very expert in the exercise of this policy; and when the Jacobins levelled all orders, they endeavoured, with equal assiduity, to follow the example which had been set them by the court.

That artifice and cunning are true policies was the uninterrupted canon of Cardinal Fleury, as well as of Cardinal Mazarin. They were destined, however, in many instances, to resemble the North American Indians, who, climbing a tree to rob the nest of the red-headed wood-pecker, grasp the young, as they suppose, but which young, ‘ times and often,’ turn out to be no other than the head of a snake.

* Ch. xxv.



CCLVIII.

WHO ARE RUINED BY SUCCESS.

‘ He that is giddy thinks the world turns round.’—*Young*.

THE port of Syracuse could never be entered but by an Athenian fleet; and yet, in that port, the fame, empire, and glory of Athens suffered a total wreck. Thus says Cicero*; and history furnishes many analogous examples.

Men, indeed, are often ruined by success. Sir Robert Walpole felt so strongly the defeat of his opponents, that when the time came for a new parliament, he did not exercise his usual power and discretion in securing the new house. The consequences are known to most.

The lesson is taught us in another way. The order of Premontre relapsed into every species of vice when they became prosperous †: and a thousand instances are known to all in private life, however limited their sphere and power of observation. Men fall still more often when they attempt to be guides. The people, in fact, often resemble Hannibal’s Indian elephants; their presuming dictators the guides themselves. In crossing the Rhone all the drivers perished; but the elephants arrived safely on the opposite shore.


The sale of indulgences operated in the same manner. It produced vast sums of money. The popes and cardinals, however, sold too many; and the trade had

* Orat. v. in Verrem.

† Their history is curious. Consult Helyot, *Hist. des Ordres*, tom. ii. 156, &c.

nearly overwhelmed the sellers. The power of granting these divine passports was first assumed by the bishops (in the twelfth century); and they were sold without scruple, on the presumed plea of church exigencies; but, in fact, to gratify the luxury and avarice of the episcopal orders. They were, afterwards, monopolized by the popes; and finally became, by their multitude and fruitless absurdity of application, the grand instruments by which the reformers were enabled to command so wise and so beneficial a result as the Reformation.

I seldom think of this, but by virtue of one of those associations for which it is difficult to account, I remember Salvator Rosa's picture of *La Fortuna*, some years ago, and perhaps now, in the possession of the Duke of Beaufort. In this picture the artist has represented a woman pouring from a cornucopia gems, jewels, coins, medals, crosses, mitres, and crowns, upon birds of prey and crawling reptiles, at once sanguinary and rapacious. In the struggle they trample on the symbols of genius and liberty; and globes, pens, pencils, and musical instruments lie neglected. Wolves and vultures divide among themselves the coronets and crowns; swine seize the mitres; and the ass is permitted to decorate himself with insignia of various orders.



CCLIX.

TOO GREAT FOR MONUMENTS.

‘One self-approving hour whole years outweighs
Of stupid starers and of loud huzzas!’—*Pope*.

HURD, Bishop of Worcester *, said in the warmth of his heart, that Warburton was lessened by elevation; and was too great to be advanced. The greatest possible reward for any man in this life is an inward satisfaction and sunshine of mind: but it is astonishing what men will do for a garter on the knee, a star on the breast, a mitre, or a medal in the button-hole! What, also, will they not do for empty monuments?

It is right to erect statues to heroes, painters, sculptors, architects, and musicians; but not to kings, or to men of learning and science. To those it is an honour; to these an equivocal distinction. The history of his reign is the monument of a king; his works the monuments of an author: each erecting their own monuments. How many men of genius sleep, unhonoured, unnoticed, and unknown, among the briared graves of villages and hamlets! How many ‘a dauntless Hampden,’ how many ‘a guiltless Cromwell,’ how many ‘a mute, inglorious Milton!’ But to erect monuments to eminent writers—how superfluous! The sums expended upon them, when dead, had better have been spent upon them when living:—

‘Yes; still the great have kindness in reserve,
They help to bury, whom they help to starve.’—*Pope*.

* Discourse by way of Preface, p. 85.

CCLX.

WHO ARE SUBDUED, AS IT WERE, BY THE YELPING OF A SPANIEL.

SWIFT, for instance. No power could bend him ; but he permitted himself to be so greatly mortified by an old woman, that he never after went into the street where she lived, although it was one in which he had before delighted to walk. The story is thus related in the Sloane MSS. No. 4223 :—‘ The Dean had often called ‘ at an upholsterer’s on the Quay, to order some rubbish lying before his door to be removed ; but without ‘ being obeyed for several days ; which brought him in ‘ some cholera to the house, where he warmly expostulated with the woman, and concluded with—“ Do you ‘ know, woman, who I am ?” “ Yes, please your reverence,” she replied, “ you are Dr. Higgins.”’

This Dr. Higgins is represented as having been a crazy old Jacobite, a favourite of Harley’s, and the Dean’s aversion. He was, moreover, so noisy, that he was called Orator Higgins. Swift never went into the street again.

Thus a man, whom no one could conquer, if he chose to rebel, was subdued by a woman, by merely mistaking his person for another’s.

CCLXI.

WHO ARE MARTYRS TO INFERIORS.

‘ So fell the royal oak, by a wild crew
Of mongrel shrubs, that underneath it grew.’

Thus wrote Howel of Charles I.; and it reminds one of what Pope wrote to Dr. Arbuthnot in reference to Queen Anne and the house of Stuart in general. ‘ No creature has better natural dispositions, or would act more rightly or reasonably in every duty, did she act by herself, or from herself; but you know it is the misfortune of that family to be governed like a ship; I mean the head guided by the tail, and that by every wind that blows in it.’

The ring-dove is a wild, but neither a passionate or a powerful bird; and yet, when bred up with a sparrowhawk or a white owl, it will sometimes assume the mastery and maintain it. Men, also, occasionally, allow inferiors to occupy the higher ground :

‘ As if Olympus to a mole-hill should
In supplication nod.’—*Coriolanus*.

James Stuart, Duke of Richmond*, though of a haughty spirit, was yet so diffident that he was frequently governed by men who judged worse than himself; and Whitelocke† assures us, and history confirms it, that Charles I. had this unhappiness; that he had a better opinion of other men’s judgment than he had of his own, although theirs was, generally, much weaker than his own. He was, in fact, often precipitated into mea-

* Birch. p. 110. fol.

† Memoir, p. 65.

sures his own prudence would have prompted him to avoid, by listening to the suggestions of Henrietta Maria still more implicitly than Louis XVI. listened to those of Marie Antoinette.

The advice of an inferior, both in station and in mind, can never be construed into Wisdom, any more than the string, which vibrates in a harp, can be construed into the note of music, which we hear. Yet many persons (even of capacity) willingly shut up their understanding, and act upon a reason inferior to their own, that they may not have the responsibility of their own acts. Thus the red-bird of North America, which sings with great melody, listens in silence and with great pleasure to the bunting, which 'cow—cow—cows' in the neighbourhood of its nest.

CCLXII.

WISE TO-DAY ; FOOLISH TO-MORROW.

COSMO DE' MEDICI was sometimes acting the fool, and at others exhibiting himself as the wisest of his age*. Locke's Earl of Shaftesbury, indeed, used frequently to assert, that every man was two men ; one foolish and the other wise ; and that each one follows its turn.

Edward IV. was active and enterprizing at the beginning of his reign ; a martyr to indolence and dissipation at the end of it. Elizabeth was proof against passion, at a season of life when it is all-raging with

* Vid. Macchiavelli, Hist. Flor., viii.

most persons ; and when it is extinguished in others, it raged furiously in her.

Wise to-day, foolish to-morrow! whether Louis XIV. can be esteemed wise, in any respect, I much doubt ; but it is certain, that important manufactories in England, Holland, and Germany, arose out of his impolitic revocation of the edict of Nantes.

When the Marquis de Louvois was desired by this monarch to give his opinion, relative to his proposed marriage with Madame de Maintenon, he threw himself at the feet of the king, and exclaimed,—‘ Sire, you may deprive me of my fortune, my liberty, my life ; yet, I must ever repeat, your Majesty will dishonour yourself by this marriage.’ This was a line of conduct that did honour to the Marquis de Louvois, and which the consciousness of having advised wisely enabled him to exhibit. But he lost all his influence by two designs he meditated against his master. First, to treat the Duke of Savoy in a manner so unworthy as to compel that prince to declare war against France ; secondly, by the non-fulfilment of every article of a treaty with Switzerland, to induce the Swiss to break off their alliance. How these acts of treachery were to increase his power, except by rendering him more necessary, does not appear ; but the discovery ultimately ruined him. The king insulted him. He was re-invited, however, to court, and he returned ; but, on being insulted again, he returned to his hotel, drank a glass of water, threw himself upon a chair, and, uttering a few words, immediately expired.

CCLXIII.

THE POWER OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

Oct. 10, 1807.—YESTERDAY I rode ten miles, and returned listless and weary. To-day I rode the same distance, and returned more vigorous than when I sat out. The cause of this difference? Yesterday I had no hopes of an agreeable termination to a business in hand; to-day the affair ended to my entire satisfaction.

A week since, I rose from my bed, low, languid, and apparently on the eve of an illness. A letter came! I immediately ordered my horse, and was able to hunt as well as ever I did in my life. Circumstances work stranger wonders,—whether of good or of ill.

A similar effect of mind over body furnished Xenophon with a fine argument in favour of the soul's eternity:—‘When I consider the boundless activity of our ‘minds,’ says he, ‘the remembrance we have of things ‘past, and our foresight of that which is to come: when ‘I reflect on the noble discoveries and vast improvements by which those minds have advanced arts and ‘sciences, I am entirely persuaded, and out of all doubt, ‘that a nature, which has in itself a fund of so many ‘excellent things, cannot possibly be mortal.’

Doubtless, it cannot be mortal; in a future state, too, there can be little doubt, that a large field will be opened to our observance, and ourselves endowed with senses and faculties to observe and to act with, far more various, comprehensive, and acute, than those we are at

present endowed with. Let us hope this. Suppose an error: where is the injury? Hope is the best friend that age and misfortune have.

June 6, 1831.—Four-and-twenty years ago! To-day I find myself at a small inn near Goodrich Castle, in the county of Monmouth.

But before I go farther, however, I must apologize, my dear Lelius, for every now and then speaking of myself. Yet I will not! Have I not promised to give you the result of my experience? But how can you reap what you have so often desired me to give you—the fruits of my harvest,—unless you consent to pay for the sickle? Say nothing, then; bind up the sheaves, such as they are, and take them into your barn.

Goodrich Castle is a fine ruin; and from one of the windings of the river on which it stands (the Wye) it presents a picture, so greatly admired in Milton:

‘ Towers and battlements he sees,
Bosom'd high in tufted trees.’

We stood some time to admire its appearance, and then gazed awhile on a walnut-tree, the number of nuts on which are said to indicate the plenty or scarcity of the coming harvest.

‘ Contemplator item, cum se nux plurima silvis
Induet in florem, et ramos curvabit olentes:
Si superant fetus, pariter frumenta sequentur,
Magnaque cum magno veniet tritura calore.
At si luxuriâ foliorum exuberat umbra,
Nequicquam pingues paleâ teret area culmos.’

Georg., i. 187.

On the trunk of this walnut-tree is inscribed the

name of Pulteney; and that name naturally reminding us of the Earl of Bath, my companion reflected on the character, given of that statesman by the Earl of Chesterfield:—‘ Though he was an actor of truth and sincerity, he could, occasionally, lay them aside to serve the purposes of his ambition or avarice.’

This association induced an argument in regard to precept and practice, and the imperative necessity some men seem to see in mixing accommodation of temper with inflexibility of principle.

To be invariably inflexible is not difficult of practice by one who is in easy circumstances, lives in retirement, far from temptation, and gazed on with attention by those who live in his neighbourhood; but those who have mixed largely, and scrutinized passion closely, know well that men may, in the language of Dryden and Boscovich,

‘ Approve the right, though they the wrong pursue *.’

I regard Johnson with veneration, for many of his views of human character and manners. Bishops may preach, and be the models for their own preaching; but no one, who has had a competent acquaintance with the world, but will agree with him in the answer he gave to one who declared, that he had no opinion of any person, whoever he might be, whose practice was not quite as good as his precepts. ‘ Sir,’ said the moralist, ‘ are you so grossly ignorant of human nature, as not

* *Video meliora (et idem etiam pacto jucundiora, utiliora) proboque; deteriora sequor.*—Boscovich on Stay, de *Systemate Mundi*.

‘ to know, that a man may be very sincere in good principles, without having good practice?’

Let us be charitable one with another ! Circumstances are, sometimes, great apologies. He, who is *hardened by practice in virtue*, might, under powerful temptations of another kind, have been equally *hardened in the practice of vice*. Certain, however, it is,

‘ That virtue only makes our bliss below,
And our best knowledge is ourselves to know.’

END OF VOL. II.







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